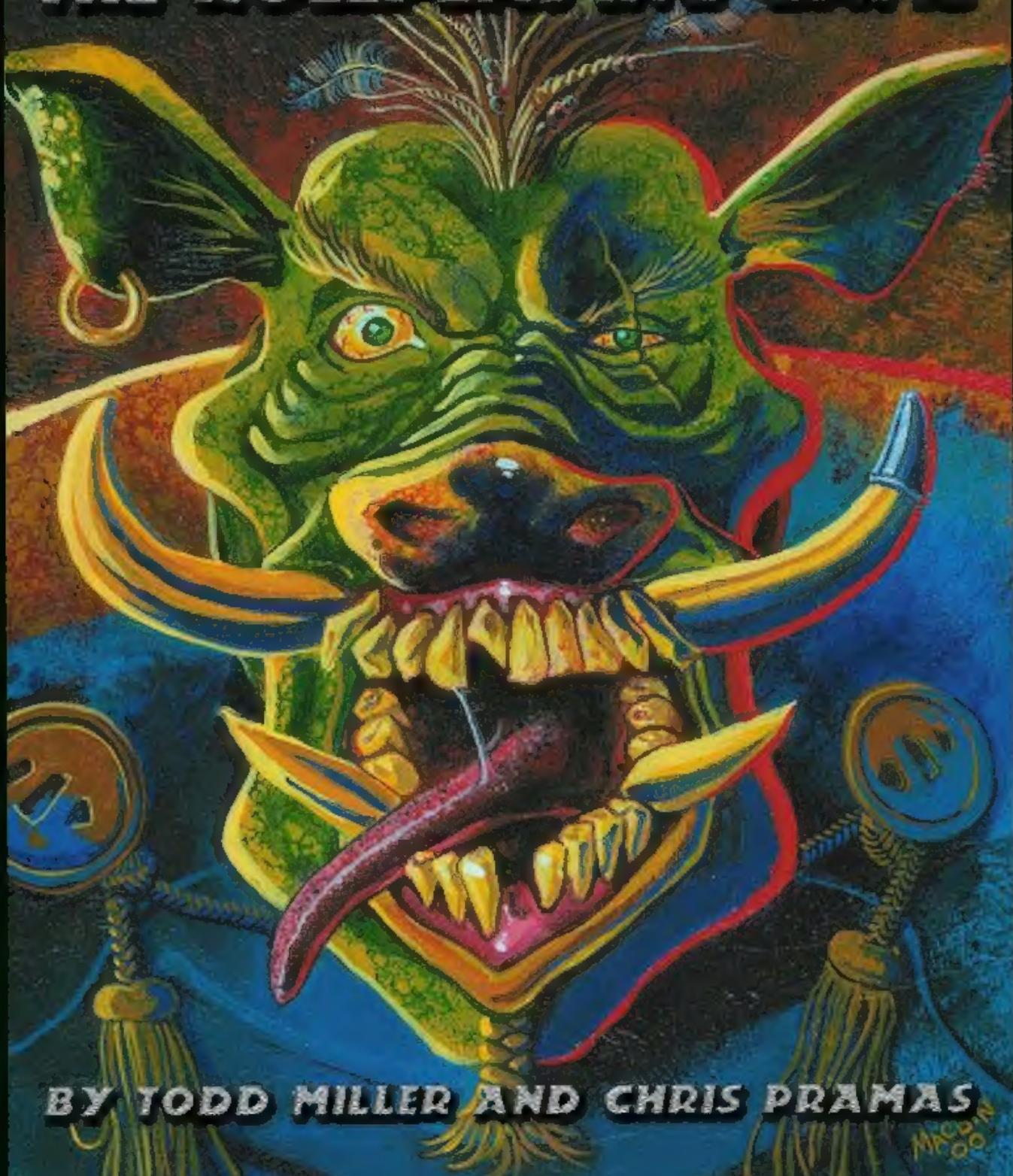


DUNGEON

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME



BY TODD MILLER AND CHRIS PRAMAS

MADDO

ORK!

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

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INTRODUCTION

"Beauty, thy name am Ork."
—Famous Ork philosopher

Orks. We all know what they look like. But it never hurts to refresh your memory. Orks are about six feet tall. Some of them are taller. They have green skin. They have sharp teeth. Uh ... they have opposable thumbs. And they almost never, ever have two heads. They wear yucky clothes, they carry lots of weapons. Some people think Orks can see in the dark, but this is a myth. Turn out the lights in a room full of Orks and you'll be able to *hear* how well they can see in the dark. (Warning: wear lots of armor.)

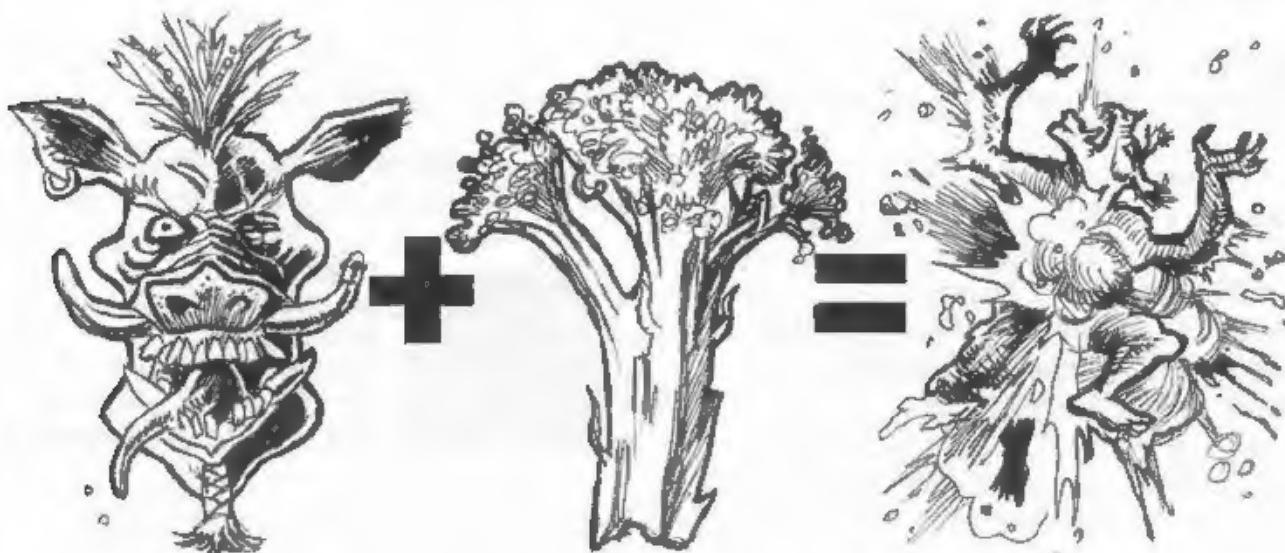
They also have the most amazing digestive system ever designed by nature. They can eat almost anything, including, but not limited to: rocks, tree bark, zebras, umbrellas, other Orks, things on fire, zebras on fire, tar, lead, shoes, fruitcake, and on and on and on... Their omnivorous nature, combined with an abnormally high metabolism, ensures that most Orks are hungry all the time and will try to con-

sume almost everything they come across. However, Orks cannot eat broccoli. This foul, hideous vegetable is completely incompatible with the Orks' digestive system. Should any Ork ever eat broccoli, whether on purpose or accidentally, *he will explode!*

Let's not forget that Orks are also mean and nasty. They like to hurt other people for no good reason. They love fighting and killing and maiming. They like to borrow all your records and never give them back. Do not go out on a date with an Ork. Even if he brings you flowers, it is a trick. He is secretly planning to eat you.

Orks do hate the sun on general principles. But the Official Ork Scientific Study for the Destruction of the Sun was put on hold when all of the Ork scientists were eaten by a Troll.

Now that that's out of the way, we can get down to the nutty-gritty. Lurking in everybody is an Ork. We know he's there. All the trappings of civilization, our forks and our minty



fresh breath mints, keep the inner Ork at bay. But the Ork wants out! We can't let him out, not unless we want to go to jail, and rightly so. Still, we can't deny the bad guy appeal of the Ork.

Being an Ork means being rude, loud, aggressive, sneaky, and angry. It means killing that Ork over there because you don't like his hat. It means tearing the still beating heart out of your enemy's chest and eating it. It means looking out for Number One Ork, and screw everybody else. It means being in a constant state of barely controlled psychotic mayhem.

Sound like fun yet?

THE WORLD OF ORKNESS

Welcome to the World of Orkness. In the following pages, you will learn the secrets of Ork culture, religion, and psychosis. You will learn to fear Krom, the terrible god who is both creator and judge. You will heed the call to arms, slaying foul Squishy Men with big pointy sticks. You will, in the end, embrace the Ork inside you, but don't fool yourself. You will not learn that the Orks are simply misunderstood primitives longing for your sympathy. Such a notion is for Star Trek fans and their ilk, and should be treated as the drivel it is. Rather, you will find out that Orks are precisely the monsters they are purported to be. But sometimes it's fun to be the monster, and that's what *Ork!* is all about.

AN RPG FOR ALL SEASONS

Yes, this is an RPG all right. If you are reading this introduction, you clearly know what that means, so let's skip the obligatory chat about what RPGs are and how we all used to play Cowboys and Indians as children. This is a roleplaying game, and to play it you'll need some dice, some friends, and some

free time. A desire for mayhem and uncontrolled chaos are also desirable but this is not strictly necessary.



MACBIN™

ORK SOCIETY

Question: Do the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few?

Ork answer: You am shut up. Me am kill you now.

Yes, folks, it's that easy. You don't need to read another word about Ork society because it's all summed up right there. However, those of you with a burning thirst for knowledge, we challenge thee to press forward! Forward!

Orks are loosely organized into hunter/gatherer societies. However, there are some Ork tribes that engage in simple farming. They grow food that doesn't need a lot of care or supervision to flourish, such as the hardy Ork river cucumber, or the delectable Ork mushroom fungus. But mostly, Orks tend to eat whatever they can get their grubby little hands on. Hopefully without working too hard to get it.

Orks are tribal, and there are many different tribes of Orks. A shaman, a really old and mystical Ork who can command magic powers, leads the tribe. The shaman is served by a squad of enforcers, who go about savagely beating his domestic policy into the hearts and minds of his fellow Orks. The common Ork hates and fears the shaman, and dreams frequently of shoving a spear into his head.

As leader of the tribe, the Shaman gets to make all the big decisions. Most of these decisions are usually about war. For example, who do we go to war with next? And, who do we go to war with after that?

But why are Orks so aggressive? Why can't they be nice?

It's all about brain chemistry! Orks have a very turbulent amount of chemicals in their body, chemicals that are constantly in a violent state of flux. It has been speculated that large amounts of certain hormones in their bodies may be the cause for their aggressive nature. Also, it is known that these chemicals can be manipulated by Magic to create spectacular results. Ork blood is toxic, and if mixed with certain other components can become explosive. So, if you were walking around with the equivalent of liquid dynamite pumping around in your brain, you'd probably be a tad on the nasty side, too.

We must also consider Ork religion. Remember that Krom, the all-powerful god, created the Orks last, and they were his chosen people. Everybody else before that Krom created by mistake. (Actually, he threw up the whole world in something like fourteen thousand days.) Because of a slight misunderstanding with their almighty deity, the Orks were forever cursed to fight all the other races of the world. (For more info, see *Chapter Three: Ork Religion and Magic*.)

You can follow Ork thought by examining the following equation:

A) Orks think they are the strongest, the bravest, and the worthiest race ever created by Krom.

Plus...

B) Everybody else is puny and weak and Krom hates them. Or at least, Krom hates them more than he hates Orks.

Equals...

C) Orks should slaughter everybody who is puny and weak and take their stuff!

For Orks, fighting and killing are not only a mandate from their god, but also a natural extension of what they were designed to do.

THE ORK WAR MACHINE

Most of Ork society is dedicated to keeping the Ork war machine running. Orks are constantly doing battle with their neighbors over precious resources such as food, water, and land. Orks frequently need to steal weapons, armor, and items of technological value from their enemies. They are also constantly doing battle over honor, pride, and greed. The Ork concept of these intangibles is hard to pin down. It often reflects whatever is best for the Orks at that moment.

Indeed, whether or not Orks have honor has been the subject of many debates among non-Ork scholars. Honor is a tricky word, one that implies honesty, fairness, fame and glory, and respect. We know that Orks consider honesty and fairness characteristics of the weak, and so, on the battlefield and elsewhere in Ork life, these two traits are seldom encountered. After all, Orks know there is nothing to gain by telling the truth, and why be fair if it's going to give the other guy, that goat-licking freak, some advantage he doesn't deserve?

So perhaps it is more accurate to call them glory hounds. An Ork earns respect from his peers by slaying many enemies. Should another Ork come along and call him a coward, that Ork will feel his honor is being attacked. A fight will break out, and someone will lose an eye.

That Orks are greatly feared by their enemies, there is no doubt. Many of the other races

ORK LANGUAGE

For Orks, remembering what happened this morning is an exceedingly difficult task. It's almost impossible to recall the events of yesterday, and last week might as well have been millennia ago. This unique Orky memory plays a prominent role in Ork language.

Orks speak every sentence in the present tense. Actually, it's more like the immediate tense, because every verb and/or adjective is prefaced with the word "am." For example, "Me am going to smash your face!" or "He am worthless and weak!"

The past tense exists, but once again, all verbs and adjectives are prefaced with the word "am." For example, "Two days ago, Squishy Man am stabbed Gork in the head," or, "Where am Gork? Me am threw Gork into volcano!" In this next sentence, we preface the adjective: "Yesterday, he am worthless and weak. Today, he still am worthless and weak." This makes the Orks feel their language is more active and strong. Why waste so much time speaking so many filthy words?

The rest of the Ork language is pretty simple. Instead of "I," always use "Me." Frequently drop the definitive article before nouns, possessive pronouns, adverbs, and adjectives. All Orks know, words such as "the," "that," and "those" are the words of cowards.

"A" does not have to be used as an indefinite article, but "am" does. For example, the sentence "He is a bad Ork" would be changed to "He am bad Ork!" Or, "That is a dumb thing to say" becomes "That am dumb thing to say!"

The verb "do," and most of its tenses ("did," "does," and "done") don't exist. Substitute the word "am" in their place. For example, "The word 'does' am not exist!" Or, "He am not like being poked with swords." You can of course use the present participle, "doing," as long as you include "am": "What he am doing with Grak's rock?"

The verb "be" almost does not exist. Orks do not say "be," "been," "are," "was," "were," "is," or "isn't." In their place, substitute "am" once again. For example, "The Trolls am hiding in cave!" Or "That am not my cupcake! It am Gork's cupcake!"

consider the extermination of the Orks to be a top priority. A vicious cycle is created, with Orks fighting everyone and everyone fighting the Orks. Long and deadly stalemates are a constant factor of Ork warfare. One side will check the other, and so on. Even though Orks are dedicated to fighting, it doesn't mean that they always win. The other races put a great deal of effort into protecting their homelands and destroying the Ork menace. Some Ork tribes are constantly on the defensive, while others have been wiped out.

During these setbacks, the Orks concentrate on recuperating their strength and licking their wounds. It is a dark day when Orks lose a major battle, and you can be sure that on the homefront there are personnel changes going on. Orks who failed their tribe on the battlefield, and did not die gloriously in battle, are executed. The Orks responsible for the kooky schemes and tactics that created the catastrophe are also executed. During this time, the Shaman has to be especially careful. He may find himself being violently ousted from power

by another up-and-coming Ork. Usually this Ork is his apprentice.

The one thing you can be sure of is that the Orks will never forget their defeat, and will do everything in their power to get revenge.

MOVE ON ORK SOCIETY

Orks live in the woods. They do not live in caves. It's dark in caves, and caves are also full of Trolls and other things that eat Orks. A typical Ork village has anywhere from forty to eighty grown Orks, with a varying amount of young Orks (also called Gunks) running around. They live in crude huts made out of wood and mud. Every village also has a building or clearing for important rituals.

When Orks are not out looting and killing, they spend their days hunting and searching for something to eat. A few Orks have actual jobs, and barter their services for the necessities in life. Barter is the foundation of the Ork economy, with food being the most valuable



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commodity, followed by weapons. Orks are vicious Capitalists, always looking to screw the other guy over in a deal. But they must be careful not to screw the wrong Ork, who will return with a sword and kill them. They do not have their own currency, but looted money does have some value.

There are Orks who have skills in metalworking, clothing manufacture, and pottery making. Ork pottery is pretty sturdy, let me tell you. There are also Orks who make bows, jewelry, shoes, and even siege equipment.

"Now hold on," you're saying. "Orks are too dumb to make all that stuff and anyway aren't they too busy killing everybody to be making ashtrays?"

Orks are not that dumb. And, they learned all these skills partly through necessity, and partly through emulation. By stealing your enemy's shoes, you too can learn how to make them. Let us also remember that while Orks can manufacture these goods, it doesn't mean that they're anything but adequate. There will be no Ork catalog with glossy photos of expensive, handcrafted lawn ornaments.

Ork craftsmen will usually take on several apprentices to abuse. During a major war, however, craftsmen and their apprentices are expected to fight with the rest of the Orks. Many apprentices have advanced their careers by "accidentally" decapitating their master in the heat of battle.

As mentioned earlier, a few Orks will spend their time farming. Other Orks will sometimes need to go to them for food, and these hungry Orks are thoroughly taken advantage of. Later, they'll likely return with swords, kill the farmer and steal his crops. Ah, the perils of the Ork economy!

It should also be mentioned that there are no Ork artists. Orks hate all forms of art except

music. However, there are also no Ork musicians. Song is used in very important ceremonies, as well as for recreation. But any fool Ork who thought he could make a career out of singing would have his tongue pulled out, get tied to a tree, and be beaten to death with his guitar. Orks have no appreciation for drawing or painting, and hearing poetry actually causes them physical pain. Some of the Orks' enemies have discovered this, and use poetry as a weapon on the battlefield. Many charging lines of Ork soldiers have been repelled by the words, "I think that I shall never see, a poem as lovely as a tree."

But does this mean that Orks hate beauty? Well, yes. But the Ork concept of beauty is very different from ours. Perhaps they see our beauty as a crime against Krom. The world is an ugly place, and it is their duty to keep it that way. Beauty is once again equated with weakness and contempt. And their powerful revulsion towards beauty could explain why they are so eager to destroy it.

But Orks have a great appreciation for the sublime, in the sense that they are touched by moments of fearsome grandeur. To the average Ork then, an enormous battlefield littered with burning corpses is a scene of beauty. A monstrous siege engine crushing everyone in its path can also be found beautiful. Orks can even admire a magnificent waterfall, simply because of its bigness. To the Orks, bigger is better.

Orks seem to know that our concept of beauty is different from theirs, and they hate us for it.

"Why they am waste so much time over something that am ethereal?" they wonder.

Because they do not understand beauty, they fear it. And what they fear they must destroy. On a lighter note, what they don't fear, they also must destroy. So they're not so bad.

GROWING UP ORK!

GORK GOES URG!

Gork stumbled madly through the forest. Tongue swollen, eyes full of blood and mucus, he ran to a nearby tree and banged his head against it over and over. But nothing could stop the fiery torment that consumed his body. The many bloated pustules that had grown all over his flesh were quivering with hideous elation, ready to burst. Soon their foul contents would be free.

"What ... am ... happening ... to ... me...?!" Gork screamed.

Suddenly he heaved and threw up the many rocks he had eaten the night before. Gork staggered about and fell over, clutching at the dirt and gagging. Whole tremors ferociously wracked his body, and as he looked, Gork could see the pustules were beginning to crack, and spurt a foul ooze all over the ground. Very horrible small things inside the pustules were wriggling and clawing at their pus sacs, trying to escape.

"Aaaaaahhhhhh !!!" Gork shrieked.

The pustules began to break, one after the other, with a sickening popping sound. Gork could barely move, a paralyzed, pathetic mass of useless flesh. He could only stare in horror as tiny, wretched little creatures began to slowly emerge from the broken pus sacs. Wriggling, slime-covered things, they opened their tiny eyes and looked about curiously. Some of them were already howling, and Gork could see the sharp, needle like teeth that filled their mouths.

Gork recognized what they were and desperately tried to shake them off. But the Urg had sapped

the last of his strength and he could only watch helplessly as tiny monsters crawled up his body towards his face. There were about ten or twelve of them, strong, angry looking brutes, and Gork knew they were hungry.

"You am go away ... me smash you!" Gork said.

They looked at him curiously, perhaps they even knew who he was. But if they had any feelings of love, they were quickly snuffed by a gnawing, burning desire to feed. The largest of the creatures lunged into Gork's neck and bit him on the jugular. The others quickly followed, tearing into Gork's flesh and feasting on his warm entrails. Before everything went black, Gork had a moment to pause and reflect...

"Me am hate baby Orks!" he said.

URG!

Orks have no genders, *per se*. That is, they're all male. So then, how do they manage to grow into those mighty hordes that are the scourge of the known universe? How can they do it without sexual reproduction? The answer is budding.

Like many organisms in nature, Orks grow smaller copies of themselves out of their bodies, which eventually separate and grow up to become big Orks themselves. Orks refer to this as the Urg! Now usually, any Ork word with an exclamation point on the end means fun. Not this time. The Urg! is a painful, terrifying, and usually lethal experience.

The Urg! strikes Orks when they are "sexually mature," although no specific age has been documented. Several teams of Ork scientists

were working on the project when Trolls ate them. However, there are some facts about the Urg! that we know for sure.

1) The Urg! creates a mental state in the Ork that can be likened to insanity.

The incredible pain that is brought on by the massive chemical changes inside the Ork's body is one reason for this. Considering that Ork physiology is a bit strange anyway, imagine the effect of a powerful concoction of super hormones suddenly appearing from out of nowhere and then spiking for days on end. These chemicals are preparing the body for the budding process. They usually keep the Ork in a semi catatonic state, so he will be unable to put himself in situations that would endanger the brood. The chemicals also increase the Ork's anti-social impulses, driving it away from other Orks who might otherwise stick a spear in his head "just to see what happens." The Ork tries to cope with all these changes by banging his head against a rock, tree, or other large, hard object. Although you would think this would be a bad thing, the colorful distraction of smashing one's head into a boulder has a very soothing effect on the Ork during Urg!

Another reason for the Ork's agitated mental state is the horror of seeing his own body slowly being covered with cantaloupe sized sacs of pus, which occasionally wiggle and screech. These pus sacs are essentially external wombs, full of life-nurturing fluids, where the young Ork gestates. The average Ork during Urg! grows anywhere from eight to eighteen of these sacs all over his body. They grow quickly, erupting with amazing speed and reaching full size in a matter of days. Each sac starts out about the size of a golf ball, and is incredibly resilient. The reason for this is that many Orks during Urg! attempt to claw off these annoying, painful protuberances from their bodies. The sacs have also been known to change color, from a milky white to a deep green. Towards the end of the Urg! the sacs become so full of embryonic ooze that they burst, releasing the baby Ork into the world.

2) The Urg strikes without warning, usually at an incredibly inappropriate moment.



The Urg! is known to strike Orks mostly in the spring and fall. The Urg! attacks suddenly and violently, usually with the appearance of the telltale pus sacs and an enormous change in psychological demeanor. The Ork panics, and rapidly succumbs to a full-scale Urg! attack.

Strangely enough, the Urg! sometimes manifests itself during moments of extreme stress, or during large social gatherings, subjecting the Ork to mortifying embarrassment. That said, it's also not uncommon for an Ork to wake up one day at find that he's gone Urg!. For about twenty-four hours the Ork can somewhat control himself, but as the Urg! progresses, that control weakens. It is difficult for an Urgging! Ork to pretend that there is nothing wrong. Eventually his comrades will notice that something strange is going on with their tribe member. And that is when they will get the hell away from him.

3) The Urg! is a really weird thing and it freaks Orks out.

Screaming at the tops of your lungs like a stark raving lunatic, banging your head against trees, and being covered with hideous, pulsating sacs of ooze won't make you the most popular Ork around town. Orks fear the Urg! like almost nothing else, and when a member of a village succumbs to the Urg! he is always shunned. Urgging! Orks usually run away, but sometimes they are too incapacitated or too scared to move. A gang of Orks will escort these individuals out of the village at sword point if necessary. But even finding someone to do that is difficult.

Orks believe that the Urg! could be contagious, and there is evidence to prove them right. Orks in the vicinity of an Urgging! Ork will sometimes spontaneously erupt in pus bubbles, and run screaming into the nearest tree. This is a sign to the others to also run away. An Urgging! Ork encountered in the woods is given a wide berth, even if he is from an enemy tribe.

Why are Orks so frightened of the Urg!? For starters, the tendency for Urgging! Orks to run off into the forest, *and never come back*, is a pretty big clue to the other Orks that something very bad has happened to him. Also, the remains of the recently devoured have been stumbled on from time to time, and usually, somebody recognizes the guy and says, "you know, last week he Urg!" Other Orks will shake their heads sadly and nod. A few Orks have witnessed a "birth," but their stories sound so farfetched that others will refuse to believe them. Several blasphemous Orks have been put to death for making the Urg!-to-Ork-baby connection. Only the shamans know the true secret behind the Urg!, but they keep that knowledge to themselves.

So then what happens to these baby Orks?

By now you're probably wondering why the Orks don't remember their own births. Most Orks cannot even remember what happened to them yesterday. Their childhood memories are a blur of fear, hostility, and hunger. Much like their adult memories actually, but even fuzzier. Orks who spend too much time dwelling on what happened to them as children are freaks of nature, and are mercifully dismembered by their fellow tribesmen. Needless to say, there are no Ork psychologists. And if there were, they would be worthless and weak. And they would be eaten by Trolls.

So then what happens to those nasty little bundles of Ork joy after they eat their parent? After their initial hunger is satisfied, many baby Orks spend the next few hours killing the other baby Orks. It is a terrifying battle to see who will earn the right to feast on the rest of the corpse. We can see how the Ork mind takes shape right from infancy, as alliances between broods are made one minute and broken the next. Eventually, only the strongest and the most devious will have survived. To them go the spoils of a few extra scraps of food.

And then it's gone. By this time the Ork has already grown considerably, and is ready to leave the "nest" in search of another meal. During this time, the baby Ork often encounters many dangerous creatures, and ends up becoming part of their lunch. However, baby Orks don't go down without a fight, and some animals have been known to pass them up in favor of a more docile snack. There's also the suspected debilitating indigestion that comes with eating a raw baby Ork. The authors recommend washing baby Orks thoroughly before consuming.

So how do these little suckers find their way back to the rest of the tribe? As we know, Orks possess an amazing sense of smell, which is highly developed even from birth. The baby Orks smell the rest of the tribe and follow the scent until they reach the Ork village. (There are those who would say it's rather easy to find an Ork village using the sense of smell anyway). This perilous journey could take days, and possibly weeks, and only the hardest survive. Once they make it back home, they are treated with all the contempt a young Ork deserves.

Young Orks are referred to as Gunks by their older relatives. The word Gunk accurately sums up the feelings older Orks have for the younger generation. The reasoning behind this is simple: Gunks are small, ugly, and weak. Therefore, they are worthy only of contempt. It is not surprising then to note that the concept of "parenting" is unknown among Orks, and its mere suggestion may result in widespread panic. Gunks are left to totally fend for themselves, and as we all know, bashing in your fellow Gunk's head for a handful of pasty maggots is a great character builder.

THE GUNK PIT

Upon their arrival home, most baby Orks congregate in the Gunk Pit. One reason for

this is safety in numbers. A group of foul tempered Gunks could drive away an older Ork if sufficiently motivated (like, say, he's setting them on fire). Make no mistake, the Gunk Pit is the most ruthless place to be in the entire Ork community. A lethal playground where young Orks hone their devious instincts by learning how to trick, bully, and coerce each other for food. There's no Mama Ork passing out fishsticks and cookies here. Most of the day is spent desperately searching for something to eat. Clever Gunks search for food where others may not, such as under a rotting log, or perhaps they are even bold enough to steal a few measly scraps from their elders. Dumber Gunks find the clever ones, beat them up and take the food for themselves.

While they are growing up in the Gunk pit, young Orks also have a chance to create alliances and rivalries with their fellows, deciding who to help, who to run away from, and who to kill. It becomes apparent just what sort of an Ork the young Gunk's going to grow up to be. As they mature, clever Gunks begin to figure out how to take advantage of others. Dumb Gunks learn that a good fist in somebody's face solves any problem. But at this stage of their miserable existence, they are still nothing but lowly Gunk. How can they possibly elevate themselves in the depraved eyes of their community?

THE NAMELESS

The biggest problem for Gunks is their namelessness. A named Ork is someone worthy of respect, somebody to be recognized as an all around good Ork. An unnamed Ork is worse than scum. A name is rewarded to an Ork only after he has performed some impressive deed. This deed is almost always killing something or somebody in a really gruesome, but spectacular way. Killing an enemy, or a monster, or a very important named Ork is a surefire way to get a name. An Ork can also be named after pulling off an elaborate trick or hoax, stealing

a very valuable item, or fulfilling a task given to him by their named elders. (These tasks are often suicide missions. Gunks make excellent cannon fodder.) So, all those stupid, nameless little Gunks are good for nothing except target practice.

Even the thickest-headed Gunks figure this out eventually. And then they jockey among themselves to get noticed by the named Orks. If the young Gunk has some impressive qualities, the named Ork may ask him to do something for him. Maybe, just maybe, the named Ork needs somebody to test how sharp his sword is. (Watch out, young Gunks. This is a loaded offer!) Even better, sometimes the shaman needs somebody, preferably somebody disposable, to do something he considers dangerous and demearing. And you're just the Gunk for the job! Gunks are also used for slave labor, doing all the crud jobs that the named Orks consider distasteful.

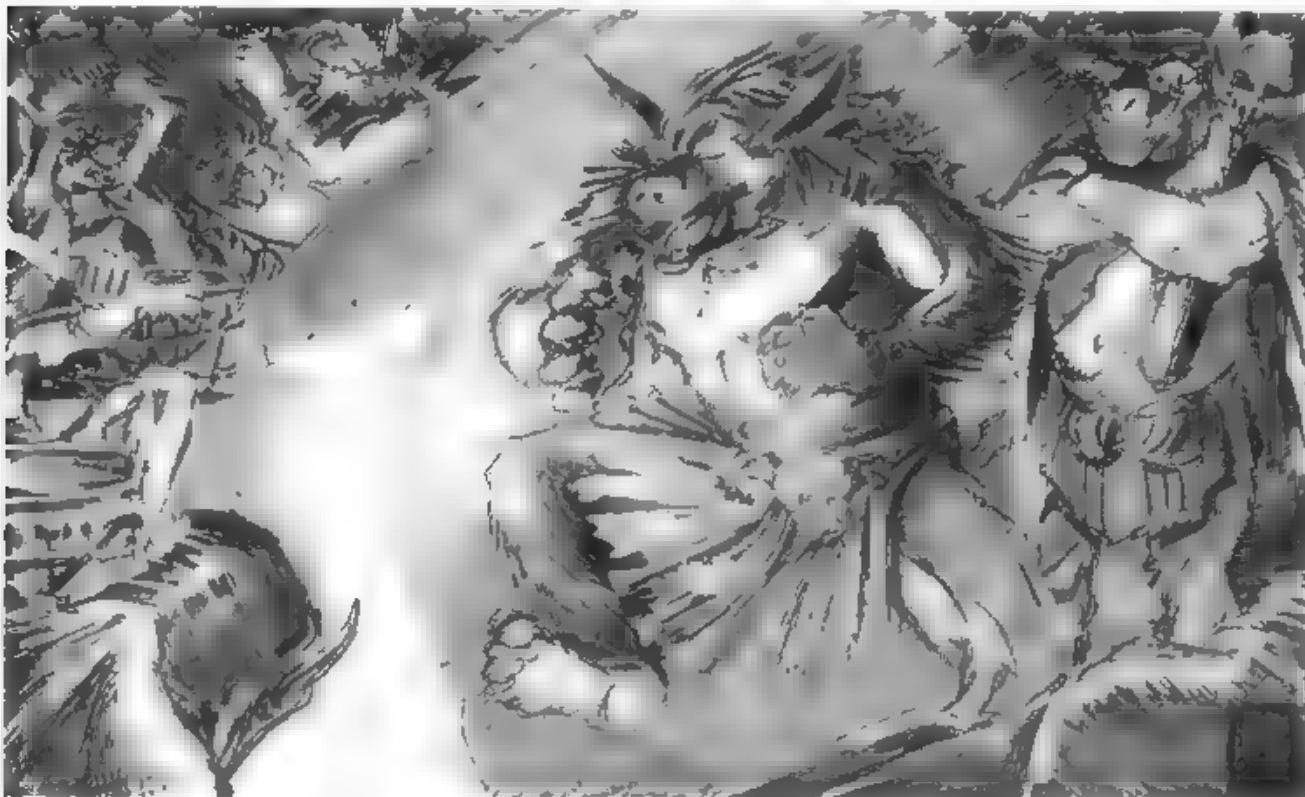
So you get noticed! And while you're carrying all the heavy packs on the battlefield, you stumble across a wicked Squishy Man and you

kill him with a stubby rock. Congratulations! You are no longer Gunk! You are sure to get a name now! But there's one last step...

THE NAMING CEREMONY

The Naming Ceremony is the single most important ritual in Ork society. Every Ork remembers the day he was named, long after he has forgotten the first time he killed someone for whistling, or ate the steaming heart of a freshly slaughtered giant sloth. On the evening following the day when the amazing deed was performed, all the named Orks of the tribe gather together in a large dwelling. The shaman stands before them, dressed in his Naming Costume. This costume is very impressive, covered with colorful feathers, fearsome bones, and other curious bits of decoration. A huge skull fashioned into a helmet makes an excellent accessory to this delightful ensemble.

The young Gunk is escorted into the dwelling and taken to the center of the room. The named Orks of the tribe then begin to beat on



drums of various size and shape. A brutal, primal, and ugly beat, it chases out all other sounds. When the rhythm is established, the shaman gestures to the young Gunk to begin his Naming Song.

His what?! Orks singing? Get out of town, you say. But it's true!

The Naming Song is a harsh chant that tells the story of how the Gunk performed his name-worthy deed. The Gunk must vividly sing about his deed, using all the dramatic imagery he can muster. The song should make the named Orks feel as if they were there, or better yet, as if they are seeing the action right before their very eyes! It is vitally important for the Gunk to keep up with the beat, as well as to keep the interest of his tribe members. If they become bored, whether it's because the imagery is dull, or the Gunk is an inept singer, then the privilege of getting a name is revoked. Worse still, the tribe de-

scends upon the boring Gunk and tears him limb from limb.

But, if the song is good, and there's lots of action and drama and bloodshed, and it's sung with gusto and zest, then the tribe is pleased. When the Gunk has finished the story, he signals the drum beaters so by screaming at the top of his lungs, and throwing himself violently to the ground. It's also good to roll around and shriek a bit. These extra touches are appreciated, and make for a good ending. Then, the shaman steps forward, and grabs the Gunk by the face. Squeezing the Gunk until his face turns hideously red, the shaman pronounces for all to hear the Gunk's new name! The tribe shouts and cheers, and then everybody gets drunk and fights. If they are lucky, somebody loses an eye.

AN ORK BY ANY OTHER NAME

So, you managed to get yourself a name. Good for you. Now your miserable life gets even harder. You may be the Hot Tamale today, but tomorrow there's an Ork out there who wants to smash your face. An Ork constantly has to defend his name against those who would benefit from proving that he is weak. Which is just about everyone. Named Orks fight to maintain a hierarchy, trying to become the strongest, meanest, and most powerful Ork. At the top of this dangerous pyramid stands the Shaman-King, the baddest Ork of them all.

See, it's all about respect. And stuff. The most brutal Orks get all the good stuff. Like the bloodiest meat, the sharpest swords, and the fastest blenders. Good stuff that the super bad Orks take away from the jive turkey Orks because they deserve it. And they get power. They can order other Orks around to do things, whatever they want them to do. They want that Ork to dance the Funky Chicken, then that Ork better dance if he knows what's good for him. Dance, you egg-sucking Ork boy! Dance!

Gunk Naming Song

Me am walking, through the woods...
Me am see, sneaky Squishy Men!
Me am say, they must die!
And me am go, to kill them...

Me am grab big sword...
Sword am sharp as Krom!
Me am find the sneaky Squishy Men...
And stab them in the head!!

Blood! Blood! Die you Squishy Man! Die!
Stab you, stab you, smash your face...
You puny Squishy Man!

Me am eat your brain...
Eat your brain, Squishy Man!

You am dead!

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaauuuuuuggggghhhhhh!!!

The best way to get respect is through terror. What the Ork wants to do is sow the seeds of fear. He wants the others to fear what he is going to do to them if they don't show him the respect he deserves. But how do the other Orks know if he's the Tough Guy, or the Flimsy Man?

Orks will constantly test each other for weakness, for cowardice, for some sort of flaw that will be the other Ork's undoing. And then they pounce on him like a savage wolverine. Sure, knocking around a bunch of puny, whimpering Gunks will show that you're tough, but to really get status you need to take down somebody important.

THE CHALLENGE

There are two kinds of challenges. The casual challenge is sort of a spontaneous, let's throw down and settle things right about now kind of dispute. And then there's the formal challenge, along the lines of I'm gonna kick your ass in front of everybody because you're a sucker and everybody should know it. The mind boggles attempting to sort out the subtle differences between these two challenges, but they are there.

A TEXTBOOK EXAMPLE OF THE CASUAL CHALLENGE

Gnarl the Ork is walking to work. "La la la," he says. He sees Karl the Ork. Then he steps on Karl the Ork's foot!

"Ouch," says Karl.

And then ... Gnarl walks away!

"Hey! You am step on my foot!" yells Karl.

Gnarl turns around and looks angry. "You am talking to me?" says Gnarl.

"No. Me am talking to goat's butt!" replies Karl.

"Then me am smash your face!" shouts Gnarl.

Gnarl then smashes Karl's face, thereby earning him respect from the community. Karl, beaten and bruised, is despised by all for being worthless and weak.

The casual challenge is almost never a pre-meditated act. Instead, it is used when an instantaneous decision is needed: who is right, and who is wrong. Of course, the winner is always right. If you win enough of these casual challenges, many Orks will assume, in advance, that you are always right. This has many advantages. So, go ahead and pick random fights as long as you know you can beat the other Ork silly—because if you lose too many casual challenges, you will soon be always wrong.

A TEXTBOOK EXAMPLE OF THE FORMAL CHALLENGE

Gnarl paces back and forth before the assembled Orks. He growls and gestures obscenely toward Karl the Ork. "Karl am ... a worthless, dung-eating coward!" He shouts.

"That am not true!" Karl yells back.

The assembled Orks jeer and grow rowdy. Crud, the all-powerful shaman, bangs on a small, ceremonial drum with the Bone of Judgment. "You all am shut up!" He sneers. "We am must hear the rest of the challenge."

Gnarl leaps about, snarling and shouting. He looks at Karl with fiery, accusing eyes. "Yesterday, me am see Karl ... sneak out of village ... go over to Squishy Man village ... and rub dainty, fresh flower petals under his arms!"

There is a gasp from the crowd!

"That am not true!" Karl screams.

He rushes forward to attack Gnarl, but is held back by two really large Orks. The assembled Orks cheer and roar, hurling curses at both of

the Orks standing before them.

"You am smell Karl! You am see Gnarl speak the truth!" Gnarl says.

Several Orks rush forward to smell Karl, who beats them back with his fists.

"Me am no smell like flowers! Me am smell bad!" Karl shouts.

Crud bangs loudly on the drum with the Bone of Judgment. "Enough talk! Gnarl, do you am make a challenge against Karl?" Crud demands.

"Yes!" Gnarl replies.

"Then you am fight!"

Gnarl charges recklessly into Karl, and the two Orks fall to the ground, biting, punching, and snarling. Gnarl smashes Karl's face in, killing Karl instantly. After the battle, he is respected and feared by all. And he gets to take all of Karl's cool stuff.

ORK DEATH

So, after all you've read it should come as no surprise that Orks have incredibly short life spans. Here are the top ten ways an Ork meets his bitter end:

- 1) Sword shoved in head
- 2) Spear shoved in head
- 3) Other weapon shoved in head
- 4) Eaten by other Orks
- 5) Eaten by Troll
- 6) Eaten by Giant Mutant Cockroach
- 7) Eating broccoli and exploding
- 8) Used as a test subject in a Dangerous Experiment
- 9) Trapped in a refrigerator and suffocating
- 10) Uh ... there are only nine ways

So how do Orks cope with death when it is so common in their harsh world? To the Orks, life is cheap. The world hates you, Krom probably hates you, and the other Orks certainly hate you. Everybody wants to see you dead. So how you gonna go, Ork boy? Standing on your feet, or crying like a baby?

For Orks, the best way to die is gloriously in battle. Big surprise there, huh? Dying while fighting is the way Orks believe they *should* go. Savagely attacking a vicious horde of enemy soldiers in the name of Orkdom, frothing at the mouth, clutching a bloody sword and a decapitated head, and being struck by ten thousand spears—now that's a death! A death worth singing about every Christmas Eve! But nobody sings songs of praise about the Ork who had a vending machine fall on top of him. No sir, they sure don't.

If you can't die in battle, you can hopefully die while performing some other service in the name of Orkdom. Being tortured to death is good. So is being shot in the back while spying on enemy encampments. These are all deaths worthy of respect. Other Orks will disavow their kinship with you if you die poorly. Like, say, choking to death on a bottlecap. To an Ork, every day starts out as being a good day to die.

It's important to go spectacularly because after you die, your Ork soul must stand in judgement before Krom. Krom sends those Orks he



is pleased with to the Great Feast, where they carouse with all the other great Orks from long ago. However, if Krom is not pleased with your death, if you died like a puny coward, or in a freak accident, or in a way totally unbecoming to an Ork, then you are Unworthy.

Those Krom judges Unworthy are reincarnated as contemptible, unOrk-like things. Some favorites include pinecones, slugs, possums, fungus, and tapeworms. To add to the punishment, many of the Unworthy can still remember who they were in their previous Ork life! It is a great shame that will torment them for as long as they live.

The souls of the Ork's slain enemies do not go to Krom. The Orks aren't sure where they go, but they hope it is someplace bad. A bad place with fire, and pain, and little devil men with pointy horns coming out of their head.

Many Orks meet death after living only a few short years, but a few Orks do manage to age ungracefully into surly old bastards. Watch out for these Orks! They're smart! When an Ork has somehow managed to survive for that long, you can be pretty sure that he's crafty, mean, and resourceful. How did they get to be this way? Brace yourselves here. Orks actually get smarter as they grow older! Their brain is in a constant state of evolution from the minute they are born. And though it would seem it evolves slowly, we must consider the Orks' gradual rise to super-intelligence as remarkable. The Ork who benefits from this the most is the shaman, the eldest Ork who long ago made the connection between age and brainpower. To consolidate his power and ensure that a peer does not usurp him, the shaman will kick the other elderly Orks out of the village to face almost certain death.

What age that is exactly is up to speculation. But we do know that it's the shaman who decides when it's time for an Ork to take "The Long Walk," a journey off into the dangerous

woods toward the unknown, hopefully to be eaten by flying monkeys. A very chaotic ceremony is held, in which the entire village shows up to consume vast amounts of alcohol and then violently chase the venerable Orks out of town. All the while they sing songs about the uselessness of the old. It should be mentioned that, like a surprise party, it is essential that these ceremonies are orchestrated without the knowledge of their honorees. When the elderly Orks have been driven a sufficient distance away from the village, the celebrants return to their homes to sleep off the intoxicants.

So what happens to those poor old Orks? Many of them do eventually die, mostly from the accidental wounds received from their loving villagers. But let's remember, these fellows are smart! There have been reported sightings of lone, elderly Ork warriors wandering the world, helping out those in need, and spreading ancient Ork wisdom. More likely, these old Orks become bitter hermits living a simple life alone in the woods, far from other Orks. A few may even be nurturing dastardly plans to return to their old village and become the new shaman. No matter what they're up to, old Orks can be devious fellows.

BEING AN ORK

So, let's do a re-cap: Orks are nasty and mean, and they do many things that decent people find despicable, if not down right evil. So why be an Ork? For that matter, why play this infernal game? Well, remember that this is all make-believe. It's just a game. Try to be careful not to cross the line with the other players and do anything they might find offensive or hurtful. Take into consideration everybody's comfort level and act accordingly. Should you find yourself on the verge of jamming your pencil into someone's eye, it's time to take a break and play a more life-affirming game.

ORK RAID

RELIGION AND MAGIC

Zork looked out across the smoldering battlefield. He heard the glorious clash of swords, and the anguished cry of the slain.

But Zork was angry. For his sworn enemies had slaughtered many of his tribe, and yea, the hour was grim.

Zork planted his sword in the ground and kneeled before it. Grasping its pommel with both hands, he looked up at the unforgiving heavens.

"Krom," he whispered, "You am give me strength to crush my enemies ... and if you am not ... then you am go to hell!"

Zork spat at the cursed earth and tore his sword out of the ground. Then he charged, shouting Krom's name into the roaring battle.

The Orks believe there is only one true god, and he is Krom. Krom is a terrible, powerful god who demands to be feared and adored by his suffering Ork worshippers. Krom is the creator of all Orks, and as he has the power to bring life, so has he the mighty power to destroy it. The Orks must do everything in their power to please Krom, or some day he may rain fire down from the sky and destroy them all.

Krom is a being of titanic size. He has only one eye, and sits on a gigantic throne in his great hall in the sky. This form of Krom is not

seen by Orks until their death. But it is the image of Krom that Orks carve on their statues and idols. Often he is depicted holding a great spear, with a large crow perched on his shoulder. Every image of Krom also shows him either growling or biting down hard on the top of his shield. There are a few other embellishments. Krom is sometimes depicted holding a flaming heart, or with blood running out of his eye. Other times he clutches a handful of snakes or wears a large goat skull for a helmet. Different villages will often come up with their own variation of Krom's image.

Orks place these idols in central locations in their village. There is usually one idol of gigantic size, around which the village congregates for communal rituals. They go there to make offerings and sacrifices they hope will please the angry god. Many Orks also hope to gain Krom's favor this way. On occasion, Krom has elected to watch over the life of an Ork who particularly interested him. Some of Orkdom's greatest heroes claimed to be of these chosen few.

When it comes to offerings, Krom wants blood. Lots of blood. Krom is thought to feed on the flesh and blood of all under his domain. Sacrifices of various organs, ripped out of their owners' screaming bodies, are preferable. Krom is also thought to feast on the souls of those who are executed before his icon. Countless enemies have been dispatched this way, and mass slaughters before Krom are considered something like a national Ork holiday.

When Krom has not been appeased in this way, he makes things very bad for the Orks. Horrendous catastrophes have befallen those foolish enough to be lax in their worship of the almighty Krom. Entire villages have been destroyed, totally obliterated from existence. Krom is also fond of plague, pestilence, and famine. Individual Orks who earn his ire are subject to cruel punishments and horrible curses. Orks know there are many ways to make Krom angry.

Krom almost never performs miracles. Those miracles he does perform are hardly ever considered "benevolent" by their observers. They are destructive, disturbing, and cataclysmic events that leave the Orks shaken to the core. When Krom does appear, whether as a frightening, spectral being, or in the nooks and crannies of an English muffin, those who see him go blind, their eyeballs instantaneously catching fire. Krom saves these dramatic appearances for really special occasions, like the destruction of the world.

Krom also has no "heavenly" agents who do his bidding. He keeps the company of crows, who are thought to be able to travel from our world, the World of Orkness, to Krom's kingdom. Because of this, crows are treated with reverence. When a crow appears before an Ork it is often thought to be a good omen. Perhaps the crow is a sign of Krom's approval, a positive message from the god that things are as they should be, and may even get better. Or, perhaps the crow is Krom's spy! Sent to watch over the Ork to make sure that he is being a good, devout Ork. Woe to those Orks who act poorly before crows.

Every so often, an Ork comes along who claims to be a prophet of Krom. The Ork declares that Krom has been speaking to him, telling him to carry his message to the others. Most prophet Orks are looked on very suspiciously, for it is not natural for Krom to waste his time talking to some lowly Ork. They have strange ideas, and sometimes act like lunatics, talking about "visions" and "harmony" and "the apocalypse." Some prophets have been known to



perform outrageous acts against themselves or others as proof of their divinity. Setting themselves on fire is a particularly popular stunt.

An Ork prophet may truly be devout, or he may have another agenda. Whatever his reasons, an Ork prophet is a threat to the social order. The shaman is especially wary of these characters, and often insures they meet a gruesome end. Nevertheless, some Ork Prophets have succeeded in gathering large congregations of Orks around them, and often strike out into the woods to form bizarre, utopian cults. Many of these cults are eaten by Trolls. But does Krom speak to these Orks? We may never know the truth.

How does the average Ork feel about Krom? Summed up below are the four main characteristics of Ork piety.

1) Annoyance

Krom is annoying. He gets in the way all the time. He always wants something. It's so hard to please Krom. He expects too much. He's always wreaking havoc with our world. Krom should die!

2) Arrogance

What does Krom know, anyway? He's not so tough. How come I've never seen him? Krom's never done anything for me. So what if he's a god, I'm an Ork! Hey, Krom! You want to fight? Fight me!

3) Faith

Krom is all-powerful. Krom created the world. Krom created all the Orks. He demands respect. We love him so much. Krom is the best god. We love Krom!

4) Fear

Krom is all-powerful! He could destroy you at any time! He's angry! Don't get him angry at

you! Krom can blow up the world! If you talk bad to Krom, he'll make something really bad happen to you!

As you can see, Orks are somewhat confused about how they feel about Krom. And, in many ways, Krom may be confused about how he feels about Orks. Some Orks are very devout, but others are not. The tension between Krom and his subjects is very strong. Part of this is due to the fact that the Orks often blame Krom for their misfortunes. Although they could be correct. Remember that Krom is like an ancient Greek god—he's petty, arrogant, cruel, vain, and vicious. He takes what he wants and severely punishes those who displease him.

A few Ork prophets have proclaimed that one day the Orks will rise up against their malevolent god and slay him in an epic battle. To speak of this day is blasphemy, but many Orks whisper about it when they believe Krom is not listening.

Strangely enough, the other races of the world also worship Krom.

ORK MAGIC

Magic, real slam bang magic, is incredibly rare in the Ork world. Many Orks do not understand magic and fear its strange powers. Only the smartest and the oldest Orks are able to harness the power of magic, and even then it is a difficult and dangerous task. What magic is left in the world must be coaxed out into existence, and it is almost never deployed successfully. Hence, another reason to respect the shaman's mighty abilities. So what's the story?

Many, many, many years ago, before anyone can remember, there was one of those colossal magic cataclysmic event things. The kind brought about by Evil Sorcerers that destroys everything on the planet, kills everybody, and

wreaks havoc with the space-time continuum. During this apocalypse, the world's magic was almost completely consumed. After the cataclysm, what little magic there was left was too wild and warped to control. And so, thousands of years went by, the world became repopulated, and here we are.

But there's still a little bit of wild magic out there. Ready for foolish Orks to try and harness! Countless years ago, a few clever Orks stumbled onto the secrets of magic. Many of them exploded, or were turned inside out, or burst into flames. But the ones who didn't managed to press forward, unlocking theory

after theory, and thus, the venerable tradition of the Shaman was created. And today, they continue with their fiendish experiments, probing the dark corners of magic's wild power.

ORK MAGIC FOR BEGINNERS

Ork magic is extremely primitive, full of superstition and fear, curses, totems, bloody sacrifices, and pagan rituals, with just a dash of cannibalism thrown in to make it really exciting.

There are some principles of magic that are known by all of Orkdom. For example: Eat the

HOW KROM CREATED THE WORLD

In the beginning, there was no earth, no sky, no sea. There was Krom.

Krom slept and dreamed, and dreamed and slept for countless ages.

And then, he woke up. And he was hungry. So, Krom searched around for something to eat.

At last, he found a rock. Krom ate the rock, and it was good.

But later, the rock made Krom sick to his stomach, and he threw up for seven thousand days, and seven thousand nights.

Out of Krom's stomach came the world, all the mountains and oceans and animals.

But Krom still felt sick. He never should have eaten that stupid rock!

And he was mad.

And then, he threw up for seven thousand more days, and seven thousand more nights.

Krom threw up the Squishy Men, and the Sour Men, and the Trolls, and the Giant Cockroaches and the Flying Monkeys and the Goblyns, and then, when he thought he couldn't throw up anymore, he threw up the Orks.

And they were good.

Krom spoke to them.

"You shall be brave and strong," he told them.

"You am shut up!" they yelled back.

And so, Krom cursed the Orks.

"Everything that walks, swims, or crawls on the earth shall be your enemy. And they will never rest until they destroy you!"

"But, if you should somehow kill them all first, then I shall reward you."

So spoke the mighty Krom.

And the Orks were happy.

heart of your enemy, and you shall gain his strength. (Do not eat the ass of your enemy. Never, ever do this.) Also, there's drinking the blood of your enemy, cutting out the tongue of your enemy, wearing the intestines of your enemy for a hat, and dating the girlfriend of your enemy. All of these ghoulish rituals are guaranteed to pass along magical powers to the Ork who performs them.

Orks are also highly fond of magic totems. These small objects, whether a colorful bird feather, piece of tortoise shell, or the tooth of some fearsome predator, are believed to pass along the powers of the animals associated with them to the Ork who wears the totem. Some Shamans have actually learned to bring out the innate powers of the totem, making them especially valuable, and probably dangerous. Imagine the Ork who can run like the cheetah, or fly like an eagle? (Although flying Orks have a tendency to crash into really big things, like trees, mountains, trolls, and other flying Orks.) These true totems are difficult to make, and they are scarce.

Crafty shamans have other ways to harness magic for their tribes. Using a magic ink made from the pigment of boiled groot leaves, a shaman can draw mystical tattoos on the skin of those Orks who have shown unswerving loyalty to him. Copied from tattered old books and slabs of stone, these strange, esoteric symbols from ages past can collect magical energy from their surroundings. The design of the symbol usually determines its function. Most tattoos are for strength, although some others, like the one for invisibility, do exist. These designs are jealously guarded, and are almost never applied.

The shaman must be especially careful when drawing a tattoo. One mistake in the complicated geometric pattern could mean the difference between life or death. It is not uncommon for those being tattooed to suddenly explode, or turn into a writhing pile of

snakes. Also, tattooing is hard work. It can take days or even weeks before the tattoo is complete. The process is long and stressful for both participants, involving lots of blood, fevers, sweating, delusions, and brain aneurysms. Foolish shamans have been known to drink massive quantities of groot elixirs before the tattooing, hoping to put even more mystical insight into the tattoos creation. The remains of these poor fellows are often served with a tasty cocktail sauce.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT GROOT

Groot is a purple, foul-smelling, cabbage-like leafy vegetable that grows in dark caves and treacherous swamps and bogs. Groot is also chock full of magic goodness. In fact, the groot vegetable is the most accessible resource of raw magical energy in the whole World of Orkness. For this reason, groot has become the essential ingredient for every Ork potion or spell.

The most powerful groots are harvested from the wild. Because the vegetable tends to grow in very dangerous places, very few Shamans are actually willing to risk their necks finding it. Often, a group of expendable Gunks is sent instead. The malingering odor of groot attracts a whole variety of predators, including Trolls, who like to rub groot leaves on their tongues for the tingling sensation it provides. Trolls also enjoy rubbing Orks on their tongues for similar tingling sensations.

Efforts to grow groot at home have not been very successful. Its potency is questionable, and many crops have turned out too unhealthy to use. Homegrown groot is known to have caused the Great Ork Disaster of '42, and since then, only the most desperate Ork shamans have practiced home groot growing.

Groot is most frequently boiled down into an incredibly noxious and potent elixir, which is consumed in huge quantities by Orks before battle. The magical properties of the groot



combine with the volatile chemicals in an Ork's body, creating a spectacular reaction. For a limited amount of time, the Ork goes insane, becomes super-strong, and is impervious to pain. The shaman rounds up the groot crazed Orks and unleashes them in the direction of the enemy. It takes an iron hand (and a sharp stick) to insure that the Orks don't start killing each other, and many cunning invasions have fallen apart prematurely.



due to groot-induced lethal enthusiasm. But many Orks do survive the herding process and inflict terrible casualties on their foes. The aftereffects of a groot hangover are hideous, and often the source of further casualties.

THE GARG!

Drinking vast amounts of groot elixir is rumored to cause the Garg! But in fact, it is a hazardous concoction of groot and broccoli, deliberately mixed by the shaman, that can sometimes induce the Garg!

The Garg! is a chemical reaction in the Ork's body similar to the Urg! except that it in no way involves procreation. During the Garg! the Ork's body suddenly goes berserk, undergoing many of the characteristics of a groot-induced mania, but with other, more hideous, effects. The Ork becomes warped, and can grow extra limbs, mouths, eyeballs, or heads. Also, he can become several feet taller, or smaller, grow savage talons or tentacles, and become an all-around terrifying sight. This is an incredibly painful and horrible experience for the Ork, who almost immediately goes insane.

A Garging! Ork is a lethal tornado of mayhem, as he tears around the country with the speed of ten thousand beasts, eating and killing everything in his path. The Ork will scream incoherently, and sometimes fire will shoot out of all of his mouths. A Garging! Ork is best left alone; unfortunately, it's hard to just move your village from a Garging! Ork's path.

When the Garg! is spent, the Ork usually explodes, leaving a large, smoldering crater, grieving loved ones, and a swath of death and destruction. Some Orks have been known to survive the Garg!, only to be immediately stoned to death by their tribe. The Garg! seems to serve no biological function, except the certain doom of its victim. However, its occurrences are very rare, leaving many Orks to believe that it is a myth. The exact cause of

the Garg! is unknown. It seems, more often than not, that the Garg! needs a jumpstart from the magical groot-broccoli elixir to occur. However, spontaneous Gargling! has been known to happen, usually during weddings, monster truck rallies, and national elections.

HOW THE ORKS LEARNED MAGIC

When the first Orks were foraging for food, they on occasion chanced to stumble across magical relics, artifacts, and books from a bygone era. These antiquities had somehow managed to survive the cataclysm, and there lingered over them faint traces of powerful magic. Unfortunately, they were often destroyed or accidentally eaten before their secrets could be unlocked.

However, a few clever Orks realized the importance of the artifacts, and held on to them for further study. Through centuries of trial and error, the magical properties of the relics finally revealed themselves. Those who survived this miraculous dawning of a new era in magic became powerful shamans, and used their talents to enslave entire tribes to do their bidding. And thus, the Orks' world was changed forever by the rediscovery of magic. No longer could brute strength rule alone, as the importance of intelligence took center stage.

Much to the frustration of the early shamans, they realized that magic was at best a very fickle power. And over time, the already meager supply of ancient relics, and the precious knowledge they contained, had dwindled to almost nothing. There is an urgency today to find more artifacts, as shamans send explorers to every corner of the globe, chasing rumors and long-forgotten legends in the hope of turning up that one mysterious, potent treasure. But the common shaman is lucky to possess just a pathetic scrap of the ancients' wisdom during his entire lifetime.

Meanwhile, the Ork shaman often reluctantly chooses an apprentice. Actually, it usually happens the other way around. A clever young Ork will attempt to ingratiate himself with the Shaman, becoming a doting sycophant, and a zealous slave. If the Shaman is smart, he eliminates the more promising candidates through a series of hideous experiments, dangerous errands, and games of Hold the Basilisk. Once all the potential threats to the Shaman's power have been sufficiently dealt with, the Shaman can continue the charade of training an apprentice while trying to figure out how to become immortal.

A very dumb young Ork is kept around the lab for the sake of appearances. These fellows, usually named Crud or Igor, are treated like pets and allowed to live in return for a life of complete and total servitude. Ah, but some of these Orks are actually very clever, and they pretend to be dumb in order to spy on their master and learn his secrets. If they are not caught and destroyed, they slowly bide their time and wait for the opportunity to kill the Shaman and take his place. Many of the older shamans fondly recall the day they plunged a searing hot dagger into their cruel master's eyes and feasted on his brains.

A MAGIC RUINED WORLD

The World of Orkness has almost fully recovered from the magical cataclysm. But its supply of magic has not. Magic is sort of a raw power that once existed everywhere. But now, imagine the wellspring of magic today as something like an antiquated, hazardous electrical power plant. Prone to violent outbursts of rage, and long bouts of inactivity. It is a force of nature, like an earthquake or a volcano. It is unpredictable and can suddenly manifest as if out of nowhere.

During the Magical Cataclysm, the world was contorted and deformed. Mountains, oceans,

and deserts were tossed about and rearranged like toy blocks. Great cities were razed to the ground, and small villages were wiped off the face of the earth. Gigantic, monstrous Cockroaches spewed forth from the bowels of the earth to attack the weak. Monkeys finally learned how to fly, and raised terrible armies that rained death from the sky on a frightened countryside.

But strangest of all were the dark holes torn in the fabric of the space-time continuum. These portals would appear without warning, drop their bounty of refrigerators, toasters, and blenders, and then vanish without a trace. They would appear in the sky, like the eye of some malevolent god, and pour out mechanical marvels from the 20th century. Washing machines, icemakers, even automobiles, were found scattered throughout the ravaged landscape.

Some of these portals still appear today. They occasionally pop up to drop a Ford Taurus on some unsuspecting Ork. And the adventurous explorer can still uncover the rusted treasures of previous days. The value of these "new"

artifacts is doubtful, but Ork scientists struggle in vain to figure out their secrets.

ORK SCIENCE

There will be no Ork scientific revolution. Every project is doomed. All Ork scientists are eaten by Trolls. Any player character who does something even vaguely scientific should be horribly destroyed, preferably by a Troll.

THE LAST WORD ON MAGIC

Ork culture is primitive. Shamans are terrifying. Artifacts are wondrous, lethal, and full of dark mystery. When a spell does work, it is awe-inspiring. To possess a magic totem is a sacred honor. Those who wish to learn the secrets of magic are placing themselves in grave danger. In short, magic possesses a supernatural majesty that the average Ork can only begin to comprehend. Only the luckiest Orks survive the deadly pitfalls that lead to true magic.

FREAKS OF LEGEND

There are a few races so weird and/or destructive that even the Orks fear them. Orks swap stories about them religiously but such tales always come from some Ork's friend from three villages over. Indeed, Ork eyewitnesses to these creatures are practically non-existent. Such bogeymen should be constantly talked about, but almost never seen. They do make great campaign enders though. What are you going to do when a swarm of Giant Cockroaches attack your village?

Scattered throughout the book are samplings of the Freaks of Legend. These are just a taste of the weirdness to be found in the World of Orkness.

FLYING MONKEYS

Not much is known about these evildoers of legend. They evolved out of the Magical Cataclysm that lay waste to the Old World, so many years ago. This secretive and cruel race of beings like to wear fez caps with little matching vests. They swoop down from the sky and kidnap dogs and children. Those carried away by the Flying Monkeys are never seen again. Ork scientists have speculated that the Flying Monkeys like to fly far away and drop their prey into the ocean. But the Flying Monkey project was permanently put on hold when all of the scientists were eaten by a two-headed Troll.

YOU FM ORK NOW!

CHARACTER CREATION

By now you realize that you have an Ork inside you. Oh, you may deny it, you may feign horror at the thought of stabbing people in the back and eating the hearts of your enemies, but you know it's true. Deep within you there is a roiling mass of green, an untamed miasma of Orkishness that longs to bubble to the surface of your consciousness. So dig deep, find the Ork inside you, and surrender yourself to his tender mercies.

ORKISHNESS IN FIVE EASY STEPS

Bringing your Ork to life couldn't be simpler. Just follow along and you'll be eating babies in no time.

Step 1: Pick a name.

Step 2: Assign attributes.

Step 3: Pick skills.

Step 4: Pick equipment.

Step 5: Kill Squishy Men!

Were you in your normal mental state, we're sure the above would be all the information you need. However, since you're probably engaged in a fierce struggle to control your newfound homicidal tendencies, we'll cut you some slack and explain this process in more detail.

Step 1: Pick a Name

This step is actually optional, depending on how mean your GM is. The introductory adventure in this book assumes that the PCs are still Gunks.

If the GM insists on showing mercy, starting PCs can begin their careers with names. As outlined earlier, naming is extremely important to the Orks. If you are lucky enough to start with a name, you should pick one now and decide what you did to earn it. Industrious players are encouraged to write up their Naming Song, but this isn't strictly necessary.

Step 2: Assign Attributes

Characters and creatures in Ork! are defined by four attributes. We could go on, but why pretend that you haven't played an RPG before? How could a non-gamer even know about his inner Ork, never mind show the presence of mind to buy this game? So, dispensing with the formalities, the four attributes are:

Meat: Raw physical strength, used by Orks to smash faces, break rocks with their heads, and drive jagged blades into the bellies of their enemies.

Bones: Toughness and stamina, a necessary trait in a world infested by trolls, sour men, and other Orks.

Twitch: Quickness and manual dexterity, most prized by sneaky Orks.

Mojo: A mix of innate magical power and natural charisma, Mojo is what gives Ork shamans their hold over other Orks.

When creating your Ork, you must assign scores to each of these attributes. They are rated as types of polyhedral dice (D4, D6, D8, D10, D12). A starting Ork receives 32 points worth of dice to distribute among his attributes. These can be doled out as desired, as

long as each attribute has at least D4 and no more than D12.

Example: You decide that your Ork should be strong and tough, just like Krom! Therefore, you choose the following attributes: D12 Meat, D10 Bones, D6 Twitch, and D4 Mojo. Amazingly, you find that $12+10+6+4=32$.

To make this a little easier on your addled brain, the legal combinations are listed below. Simply choose the set of attributes that best describes the Ork you want, and then assign the die types as desired.

Possible Attribute Combos

D12, D12, D4, D4

D12, D10, D6, D4

D12, D8, D8, D4

D10, D10, D8, D4

D10, D10, D6, D6

D10, D8, D8, D6

D8, D8, D8, D8

Step 3: Pick Skills

Now that you know how mean, tough, and wily your Ork is, you need to know what he can do. As we're sure you'll be shocked to find out, every Ork has a set of skills that define what he's good at. Equally shocking is the revelation that these skills are based on the attributes you've already chosen. Yes, that was indeed a bolt from the blue, as old Gary would say. A rare moment of genius, we assure you, and certainly not swiped from every RPG of the last 15 years.

Skills are rated from 1-5, where 1 is basic natural aptitude and 5 is expert training. The rating determines how many attribute dice are rolled when using the skill. For example, an Ork with a D8 Meat and skill of 2 in Smash would roll 2D8 when attempting to use his skill. You can learn more about skills and how to use them in Chapter Five.

An Ork starts with a rating of 1 in every skill. Furthermore, he receives an additional 6

points to increase his skills, though no skill can be raised above 3 during character creation. One point increases your skill rating by one, so it costs two of your six points to raise a starting skill to 3.

Example: Since all your skills start at 1, you only need to decide which ones you want to increase. Since you want to be an Ork's Ork, you decide to raise your Fight and Drink to 3, and your Smash and Chuck to 2. This costs you $2+2+1+1=6$ points.

To make things easier, skills are usually written to reflect the attribute die type. For example, a skill of 3D8 Fight means an Ork with a Meat of D8 has a skill of 3 in Fight. By looking at the skill rating, you know exactly what to roll while using that skill.

For your convenience, the skills are listed here, but full descriptions can be found in Chapter 5.

| Meat Skills | Bones Skills |
|-------------|--------------|
| Climb | Drink |
| Fight | Run |
| Jump | Sawbones |
| Smash | Swim |

| Twitch Skills | Mojo Skills |
|---------------|-------------|
| Chuck | Lead |
| Grab | Magic |
| Eyeball | Scent |
| Ride | |
| Sneak | |

Step 4: Pick Equipment

The Ork economy is rather limited. There are no well-stocked inns in Ork villages to sell ten-foot poles to adventurous sods. Most Orks have to steal and scrounge everything they own. To make matters simple, therefore, a new Ork can choose from one of the following outfit packages

Outfit 1: Scale hauberk, two handed sword or axe

Outfit 2: Studded leather and shield, big sword or spiky ball on a chain

Outfit 3: Studded leather, Ork bow, mace

Outfit 4: Scale hauberk, 2 throwing spears, battle axe

Every Ork also starts with a dagger, the clothes on his back, and a bag full of rocks, twigs, and refuse. Anything else he has to fight for or steal.

Step 5: Kill Squishy Men!

You are now a full-fledged Ork. Time to go out and kill some Squishy Men in the name of Krom! Before you go, however, Krom has a gift for you: Each starting character begins play with 1 Ork Point. These can be used to reroll dice and do other neat stuff. Ork Points and what you can do with them are explained in Chapter Seven.

PUNK OF LEGEND

Giant Cockroaches

These terrible insects are a scourge to the World of Orkness. Vicious killers, the Giant Cockroaches crawl out of the earth without warning and devour every living thing they come across, in a frenzy of bloodshed and terror. Hordes of these foul creatures have destroyed entire countrysides, and there seems to be no way to permanently exterminate them. Even the Orks quiver with fear during a Cockroach rampage.

Living in enormous nests far underground, the Giant Cockroaches seem to breed quietly and contently until some sort of mysterious signal drives them to the surface to kill. Where does this signal come from? The Cockroaches' hideous, bloated god-Queen, who lusts for power over the surface dwellers? A distant satellite hovering in the darkness of space? Or do they serve the whims of an ancient undead Ork shaman, whose brain is powered by a toaster oven?

SO, YOU WANT TO BE A SHAMAN

But wait, you say, what about the shamans? Can't I play one of those mysterious and powerful pillars of Ork society? In short, no. Shamans control Ork society, and harness unknowable magic. Some may even be immortal. Becoming a shaman should be the final goal of most Ork characters. If you are smarter, meaner, and nastier than all the other Orks, you might one day become a shaman. Until then, you'll just have to get by in the World of Orkness.



SKILLS

By now you've made your first character and are no doubt wondering how to act like a real Ork. This chapter explains basic skill resolution and describes the skills in detail. The key to understanding the mechanics comes from Ork culture itself. For the lowly Ork, each day is a struggle against other Orks, Squishy Men, and, in a larger sense, Krom himself. This constant state of conflict is reflected in the following golden rule:

All dice rolls in Ork are opposed!

What does this mean, precisely? Well, many RPGs use what's called a target number system. In these games, the benevolent GM decides on the difficulty of a given task, and the player only needs to exceed this target number to complete the task. Such systems are for the weak, since they allow the GM to show the horrid trait of mercy while assigning target numbers. In the *Ork!* RPG, the GM represents Krom himself and even the simplest task requires the player to dice off with Krom!

Leaving aside combat for the moment (which is important enough to earn its own chapter), let's go over basic task resolution. When an Ork tries to use a skill, he must contend with the will of Krom. The player rolls attribute dice equal to his skill and the GM gets to roll his Krom Dice. If the player rolls higher, the skill use has been successful. If the GM rolls higher, Krom laughs at the Ork's pathetic failure! Such is the lot of the Ork. In the event of a tie, simply reroll until someone wins. Krom hates ties!

KROM DICE

Krom Dice are a tool for the GM to make the game fun and exciting. Instead of setting a

target number, the GM gets to roll one instead. In normal circumstances, you should use 3D6 for your Krom Dice. However, you can change the number of dice to represent the favor or disfavor of Krom. See the table below.

| Type of Action | Krom Dice |
|---|-----------|
| Krom Approves (easy action) | 2D6 |
| Krom Does Not Care (average action) | 3D6 |
| Krom Is Annoyed (difficult action) | 4D6 |
| Krom Hates You! (extremely difficult action) | 5D6 |

We recommend D6 for Krom Dice, though you can change the die type if you like. A mean GM might use D10s, while a complete wuss would use D4s.

Skill Use: An Example

Aggro the Ork is running away from a Troll, and decides he'd be safer up a tree. Finding a nice, big oak, Aggro tries to climb it before the Troll shows up. Aggro has a 2D10 Climb, so he rolls his dice and gets a total score of 6 (2+4). The GM laughs and picks up his Krom Dice. He decides Krom doesn't care if Aggro lives or dies, so he rolls 3D6. Sadly for Aggro, the Krom Dice come out to 10 (3+3+4). Since 10 is greater than 6, Aggro fails his attempt to climb the tree and is eaten by the Troll shortly thereafter. He was probably experimenting with science anyway.

SKILL USE VS. ENEMIES

Sometimes another Ork, a Troll, or a Squishy Man will directly oppose your Ork. In this case, both contestants make skill rolls and the highest total takes it. You would use this type of resolution for a foot race or a drinking contest. This is also the heart of the combat system, but we'll get more into that in Chapter Six.

MODIFIERS

GMs are free to assign bonuses and penalties to reflect favorable or unfavorable circumstances. These can be as cruel and arbitrary as Krom himself, but they generally range from -5 to +5 on the final skill roll. These modifiers mostly come into play with Skill Use vs. Enemies, since the choice of Krom dice is already meant to reflect such things.

ORK SKILLS

We have described the basic skills of *Olk!* in the following pages. These descriptions include any applicable special rules.

Meat Skills

Climb
Fight
Jump
Smash

Bones Skills

Drink
Run
Sawbones
Swim

Twitch Skills

Chuck
Grab
Eyeball
Ride
Sneak

Mojo Skills

Lead
Magic
Scent

MERT SKILLS

Climb: Orks live in the forest, so they are great climbers. They most often climb trees, but do just as well with cliffs and other sheer surfaces.

Fight: This skill covers all varieties of hand to hand combat, including brawling as well as weapon use. In Ork there's no need to worry about whether your character can use a *bec de guisarme voulge* or not. If it's a weapon and you're an Ork, you can kill someone with it! For more details on combat, see Chapter Six.

Jump: You might think that the jump skill would have special rules to tell you exactly

how many feet and inches you can attempt. Afraid not. Use this just like any other skill. The GM merely needs to determine the final distance and pick Krom Dice as usual. It's that easy.

Smash: Some Orks are good at killing enemies and others are good at wrecking stuff. The smash skill is used specifically for property destruction. If you want to cause lots of collateral damage, a high smash skill is a must. And yes, this is the skill to use for knocking down doors.

BONES SKILLS

Drink: Orks will drink anything that is even vaguely alcoholic. Since Orks can digest rocks, even the worst paint varnish goes down smooth as silk. Under normal circumstances, no skill roll is required for an Ork to get blind, stinking drunk. That's called roleplaying, baby! In the case of drinking contests and the like, the drinking skill can be used to find out who can drink the most. Make a skill check as



normal. The result is the number of drinks the Ork downs before passing out. Some Orks have earned their names from prodigious bouts of drinking (as attested by such clever names as Twenty Drinks and Twenty-Five Drinks).

Run: Running may not seem like an important skill to a race as ready to meet death as the Orks. There's an old Ork saying that may shed some light on the situation, however. *Run from Troll today, or you am Troll crap tomorrow.* Details on running can be found in the combat chapter.

Sawbones: Orks fight all the time, and are in nearly constant need of medical attention. The Sawbones skill represents an Ork's ability to act like a medieval field medic. This may seem a strange choice for a Bones skill. After all, what does being tough have to do with setting bones and sewing up wounds with big needles? The answer is simple: Orks learn by operating on themselves. As you can imagine, this is incredibly painful, so only the toughest Orks learn enough about fixing injuries to be any good at it!



On the upside, Orks heal at a fantastic rate. When a successful Sawbones check is made, the treated Ork immediately gains back one level of wounds. If he gets plenty to eat and has a good night sleep, the Ork gains a further level of wounds back the following morning. As sawbones like to say, "Eat rocks and you am grow strong!"

Swim: Orks are not great swimmers. Since they live in the forest, they only really deal with rivers and the occasional lake. Ork legend has it that there is a race of aquatic Orks that live in the ocean and prey on Sour Man ships. Several Ork scouting missions have been sent to the coast to confirm these legends, but none have ever returned.

TWITCH SKILLS

Chuck: While most Orks like to bash, others find that they are very good at chucking things. They usually start with rocks when they are Gunks, but soon learn to throw axes, spears, and sometimes even other Orks. Use this skill for all missile weapons (even bows, which Orks sometimes call arrow chuckers). For more about shooting and chucking, see Chapter Six.

Grab: Often used on conjunction with Smash, Grab is the looter's best friend. It represents the ability to toss a house or a corpse with speed and thoroughness, finding and snagging all the good stuff. It can also be used to take stuff from other Orks when they are not paying attention. No one likes to have their stuff grabbed, however, and Orks that get caught can expect a face pounding at best.

Eyeball: Eyeball represents both general awareness and skill at spotting enemies and clues. When a sneaky Squishy Man is in the woods, you can spy him with Eyeball (his Sneak roll is opposed to your Eyeball roll).

Ride: In general Orks are not big proponents of riding. Some tribes have been known to ride

boars or giant slugs (and the less said about the latter the better). A few brave Orks have even tried to fight while riding a beast. This is quite challenging, especially on an ill-tempered boar. A mounted Ork uses his Ride skill in the place of his Fight skill during combat. On the upside, the Ork can add an extra die to his Meat when he inflicts damage.

Sneak: You can't ambush anyone if you can't sneak, and Orks just love a good ambush. Sneak includes moving silently and hiding. The GM can roll his Krom Dice to take into account the difficulty of the conditions, or use an enemy's Eyeball skill if anyone is actually keeping watch.

MOJO SKILLS

Lead: Shamans are the only Orks expected to lead, so they are the only Orks that actually cultivate this skill. A close examination of

successful Ork war leaders, however, shows that they too know a thing or two about leading. It's a rare Ork who is big enough to lead a war party, and smart enough to lead it for any length of time. Such Orks either become shamans themselves, or run afoul of a shaman who sees a threat to his dominance.

Magic: This skill does not represent formal skill in using magic. That is the domain of the shaman. Rather, it represents each Ork's ability to use magical stuff, like fetishes and totems. For more details on this process, see Chapter Seven.

Scent: Orks have an amazing sense of smell (no wonder, with noses that big!). They can track by smell, and the keenest of them can sniff out emotional states. Use this skill when you want to find out how many Trolls passed by, or whether the Sour Men are angry or scared. Reading emotions is difficult, and often angers Krom.

PREFIX OF LEGEND

THE LITTLE MAN WITH A HAT

To most Orks, the world is hostile and inexplicable. But the Little Man With a Hat is maybe the most inexplicable part of all. They say he appears out of nowhere, torments and teases Orks, and vanishes. Part leprechaun, part genie, all trouble.

A foot tall, in a bright red suit, wearing a matching pointed hat, the Little Man cuts a natty figure. The average Ork's first instinct will be to stomp on him. But if your foot connects with his pointed hat, you're in for a nasty surprise—it's made of wood and is pretty damned sharp.

The Little Man is as quick as the wind, and has a positively golden tongue. Upon appearing, the Little Man will promise an Ork something unbelievable—three wishes, a pot of gold, a treasure map.

But the Little Man offers nothing without a catch. The wishes all backfire, the pot of gold is under a Troll's butt, the treasure map is in Squishy Man language. The thing is, most Orks are too greedy and stupid to refuse—and the Little Man is too wily and cruel not to exploit that weakness.

There are many tales of the Little Man and the damage he has done to dimwitted Orks. You'd think that the Orks would learn a lesson or two, but there are new stories every year. Are these the morality plays of a creative shaman, or are Orks really stupid enough to fall for the same tricks over and over again?

COMBAT!

We can almost hear your sigh of relief. You've waded through five chapters of this book and you still don't know how to kill a Squishy Man! Well, you can start foaming at the mouth and gnawing on your shield now because it's combat time!

Fighting is such a big part of an Ork's life that it really deserves its own chapter. Contained herein are the mechanics of fighting and killing, as well as descriptions of such essential items as big swords and suits of armor.

Enough talk, it's time to fight!

A SHORT DIGRESSION ON TIME

Time in combat is divided into rounds. Yes, that's right, rounds. We would have invented some clever acronym like TKU (Time Keeping Unit), but we know you'd end up calling them rounds anyway.

A round is a minute, unless you decide otherwise. Frankly, it doesn't even matter. A round is however long it takes for everyone in a combat to act one time.

DETERMINE INITIATIVE

Once combat starts, it's time to roll initiative. This determines what order the combatants act in each round.

Each combatant rolls his Twitch attribute, and the fighter with the highest roll goes first. The remaining combatants take their actions in descending order, with ties meaning simultaneous action.

When it's your turn to go, you can take one action. Actions include taking a full move, shooting a missile weapon, attacking in hand to hand combat, sneaking around, or activating a magic item. The GM is the final arbiter of what is or is not an action.

MOVING, RUNNING, AND CHARGING

If you don't want to do anything else in the round, you can take a full move. This is a number of feet equal to ten times your Meat die type. If you have a D12 Meat, for instance, your full move is 120 feet per round.

If you want to take another action (like shooting) and move, you are allowed to make a half move, either before or after the other action. To continue the above example, you could move 60 feet and then shoot your bow, or vice versa. A half move that lands you in hand to hand combat is called a charge.

A full move assumes you are keeping an eye on the battle, watching out for enemies and incoming arrows. If you just want to run hell-bent for leather, you can use your run skill to go even faster. Roll your run skill, multiply it by ten, and then add it to your full move. For example, you use your run skill of 3D12 and roll a total of 24 (12+6+6). This means you add 240 to your full move of 120, and run an impressive 360 feet this round.

The downside of running is that you are not ready for combat. If you are attacked in hand to hand combat while running, your Fight skill is halved (rounding down) for the round.

SHOOTING

Any combatant armed with a missile weapon can shoot on his action. Shooting is based on the Chuck skill, and its success is resolved as normal. The GM decides on his Krom Dice depending on the range, speed, and concealment of the target.

| Target Is... | Krom Dice |
|--|-----------|
| Standing still at short range | 2D6 |
| Taking a normal move in the open | 3D6 |
| At long range/running/in partial cover | 4D6 |
| Running at long range/in full cover | 5D6 |

If the chucker beats the Krom Dice, the target is hit. Now resolve damage (see below).

Shooting Example: Aggro the Ork is sitting in a tree with his bow, waiting for a Flying Monkey to flap by. Sure enough, he spies one in the distance, flying in his direction. Aggro has a 4D10 Chuck, so he decides to take a shot at long range. The GM decides that since the monkey is flying fast and at long range, Krom hates Aggro and he'll use 5D6 for his Krom Dice. Aggro rolls a 16 (8+4+2+2). The GM gets a 20 (6+6+3+3+2), so Aggro's arrow falls wide of the mark. Now the Flying Monkey makes straight for Aggro, who is stuck up in a tree. Looks like Aggro should have waited until the monkey got closer.



FIGHTING!

Hand to hand combat is usually initiated by a charger. This means the acting combatant took a half move and attacked an opponent in hand to hand. To see if the attacker hits the defender, both combatants roll their Fight skill. If the attacker wins, he now does damage (see below). If the defender wins, he dodges or parries the attack and so takes no damage.

Note that a defender never causes damage. His skill roll is only to determine whether or not he was hit by the attacker. On his next action, the defender becomes the attacker and can then attempt to injure his foe.

Hand to Hand Combat Example: Aggro the Ork is in a big battle with some Squishy Men. His initiative for the round is 6, and on his action he charges a Squishy Man. Aggro rolls his 3D8 Fight versus the Squishy Man's 2D6 Fight. Unlucky Aggro gets a 4 (2+1+1) and the Squishy Man gets a 6 (4+2). The slippery Squishy Man sidesteps Aggro's charge, and so escapes death! The Squishy Man acts on 4, and now has a chance to hurt Aggro. This could be a bad day to be an Ork!

FIGHTING MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

In the chaos of combat, warriors often find themselves beset with several foes. The Sour Men call this "tactics," while the Orks call it fun. Naturally, fighting several enemies is not as easy as fighting only one. This is reflected in the following rule:

For each defense roll made after the first, a combatant suffers a cumulative -2 penalty on his Fight skill for the rest of the round.

This means that the first time in a round you are attacked, you get your full Fight skill to defend. The second time you take a -2 penalty to your Fight skill, the third a -4 penalty, and so on. Note that these penalties only last for the remainder of the current round. Once a new round starts, the first new attack is defended as normal.

DEFENDING DAMAGE

All right, we hear you say, enough with the number crunching and the special cases, let's get to the part where swords hack off limbs, spears stab into brainpans, and massive mace-induced trauma causes internal bleeding! Your wish is our command.

Once a hit has been scored, either by missile fire or in hand to hand, it's time to do some damage. As should come as no surprise, this is resolved as an opposed test, this time between the Meat of the attacker and the Bones of the defender. The basic formula is thus:

(Attacker's Meat plus weapon Damage Rating) vs.
(Defender's Bones plus armor Protection Rating)

If the defender's total is higher, the blow was ineffectual and no damage was done. The blow was soaked up by armor, deflected by a shield,

or was simply too weak to hurt the tough defender.

If the attacker's total is higher, he inflicts one level of wounds on his enemy for each three points (rounded up) his score exceeds his opponent's. Exceeding an enemy's score by 4, for instance, means two lost wound levels.

UNARMED COMBAT

Orks often fight with fists, feet, teeth, and the ever popular head. Unarmed combat is especially popular for challenges, since the loser often survives to enjoy his lower place in the pecking order. Unarmed combat works exactly the same as normal combat, but damage is the straight Meat attribute with no modifiers. In case it isn't obvious, this does mean that Orks can kill with their bare hands. In fact, they quite enjoy it!

WEAPONS AND ARMOR

As you've probably already sussed out, weapons and armor both have ratings. Generally, they are rated from 1-10, with higher numbers meaning more damage inflicted (for weapons) or prevented (for armor). Most normal items have a rating of 1-5, with higher ratings being reserved for special weapons (like Sour Man Boomsticks) or magical items.

| HTH Weapons | Damage Rating |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Dagger | 1 |
| Club | 2 |
| Short Sword | 2 |
| Mace | 3 |
| Spear | 3 |
| Battle Axe | 4 |
| Big Sword | 4 |
| Spiky Ball on a Chain | 4 |
| Halberd | 5 |
| Two Handed Axe | 5 |
| Two Handed Sword | 5 |

| Missile Weapons | Damage Rating |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Rock | 1 |
| Throwing Dagger | 1 |
| Lawn Dart | 2 |
| Sling | 2 |
| Squishy Man Bow | 2 |
| Olk Bow | 3 |
| Throwing Spear | 3 |
| Crossbow | 4 |
| Troll Bow | 5 |
| Sour Man Boomstick | 7* |

*The Sour Man Boomstick, unlike other missile weapons, takes a long time to reload. A Sour Man can only fire this every other round.

| Armor | Protection Rating |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Leather/Fur | 1 |
| Studded Leather | 2 |
| Scale Hauberk | 2 |
| Chain Mail | 3 |
| Back and Breast Plate | 4 |
| Full Plate | 5 |
| Shield | +1 to rating |

Every creature and critter in *Ork!* is rated with six levels of health. The first level is your undamaged state, with the following five representing increasingly heinous injuries.

These six levels are listed below, along with a numeric modifier. The modifier is applied to all die rolls while at that wound level.

| Wound Level | Modifier |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Right as Rain | 0 |
| Just a Scratch | 0 |
| Owww, Quit It! | -1 |
| Arrrggghhhh! | -2 |
| Call the Sawbones! | -3 |
| See You in Hell | N/A |

When you hit the last wound level, See You in Hell, you are unconscious and dying. For NPCs this is the last word. They are dead, period, end of story. Orks, however, get one last chance. If another Ork can reach you in a round and successfully use his Sawbones skill, you miraculously remain alive and regain one wound level.

WOUNDS AND DYING

This seems an opportune time to explain exactly how to kill someone. You've already seen a reference to wound levels, and you're probably wondering what that's all about. Let's take a look.



GM RESOURCES

The players, they have it easy. Make up an Ork, grab a few dice, and have fun, fun, fun. Things aren't so easy on the Gamemaster. That's a job that requires you to know stuff, have semi-coherent thoughts, and plan things in advance! On the upside, you get to keep secrets from your players, lord your special knowledge over them, and play Krom himself when you judge the dead. GMing isn't for everyone, but it can be just as fun as playing Joe Ork.

This chapter is full of advice and resources for the GM. You'll find out about Ork Points and how to use them, game rules for magic, adventure seeds and advice, and the strange effects of Orkish aging. Taken together, this hodge-podge of gaming goodness should get your *Ork!* game jumpstarted in no time.

THE OBJECT OF THE GAME!

Hold on, you're saying, there's no "object" to a roleplaying game! But in *Ork!*, there is. And that object is raw power. Orks are obsessed with power in its every naked, brutal form. Granted, there are other things in life for an Ork to think about. Like food, and ... uh ... hmm. To the Orks, the guy who has the most power is the shaman. So, every Ork, from the time he is a wee Gunk, has the dream of one day clawing his way up to the top and becoming the shaman. And there are going to be a lot of people to kill before he can get there.

To the Orks, the desire for power is instinctual. At every moment of their lives, they know who they can control, and who controls them. The grabs for power start small, like, say, "King of the Gunk Pit." If they have survived the valuable lessons learned during childhood,

they spend their adult years putting that knowledge to use. From early on, Orks begin to understand that there are many roads to power. They may not be smart enough, yet, to know which is the proper road for them to take, but hey, that's where the fun starts.

The players should consider *Ork!* not just a combat game, but also a game of lethal Machiavellian machinations. What is the best way for them to get power? Kill those who oppose them, or become a behind-the-scenes manipulator? Perhaps they would prefer to just lie, cheat, and swindle their way up to the top? In the end, of course, it's up to you and your gaming group to decide what sort of tone you'd all like, but mixing a little politics with your blood and guts mayhem can be very rewarding.

War am an extension of Politics

- Famous Ork Philosopher

GET SMART!

Orks get smarter as they get older. This phenomenon can happen in small degrees, or dramatically overnight. This depends on the individual Ork. There are some Orks who willfully choose to ignore their brains when thinking. Other Orks quickly learn the value of being smart. The trick is being smart while pretending to be dumb. Dumb Orks see smart Orks as dangerous sophisticates, best to be exterminated quickly. Smart Orks look out for each other as malevolent rivals. Show off your brainy talents too much and the next thing you know, you're dead.

Sometimes smart Orks will make alliances with other smart Orks. There are always many

pretenses in these arrangements, such as, "Me am not kill you later," and, "Of course you am get half of treasure." What usually happens next is a dizzying spin of deception, betrayal, and murder. However, sometimes gangs of smart Orks have managed to pull off some very incredible deeds.

For example, Ork siege equipment was invented by a trio of Orks known as Guk, Olly, and Nerg. After laboring years on their mutual creations, Olly tricked Guk and Nerg into being "test pilots" on a catapult that he sent rolling off a cliff. Guk and Nerg could not steer the catapult away from the edge in time, and died horribly at the bottom of a thousand-foot chasm. Olly went on to corner the market in Ork siege equipment for many years.

The Ork you don't want to have looking over your shoulder is the shaman. A withered old Ork, the shaman is the smartest of the smart. He has spent countless years mastering the arcane arts of magic, and possesses a terrible power. Ork shamans often use magic to increase their life spans, thus becoming truly ancient. Even without magic, the shaman is powerful. He has lived to be the cleverest by far, has seen every trick known to Ork, and may even have invented some of them.

What the shaman is like will depend greatly on the GM, and on the atmosphere he would like to create for his game. The shaman could be paranoid, insane, bloodthirsty, or just wacky. The shaman could be totally omnipotent, or at the mercy of forces larger than himself. Shamans should always be cloaked in fear and mystery. Orks often find their shaman's actions unfathomable. He may wander about the village in dark tattered robes, throwing lightning bolts and turning people into toads. Others may lurk in straw huts, pouring bowls of water over their bald heads and babbling incoherently about metaphysical stuff.

GMs should use the shaman as their mouthpiece in the game. He should be a merciless,

mean old bastard, and the players should rightly fear him. The shaman could be the force behind the game's adventures, giving the players tasks to accomplish and quests to fulfill. He may also be foil to the players' schemes, or the unlikely ally in a time of crisis. Whatever his role, remember that the shaman should be almost like a god. A petty and cruel god, sure, but capable of thoughts and deeds both awe inspiring and frightening.

In the end, you may decide that a PC's Ork deserves to become the new shaman. After all, the players have been scheming for so long to kill the bastard it's only right that eventually, maybe, they will succeed. In this event you should feel free to hand the GM responsibilities over to that player, and roll up your own Ork character. The new GM should use his character as the new village shaman, and the game can go on.

ORK POINTS

Ork Points are a resource for PCs. They represent the favor of Krom and as such are handed out by the Gamemaster. They have a variety of uses, and your players will always be begging you for more. The simplest thing to tell them is this: If you want Ork Points, then stop whining and start acting like an Ork!

AWARDING ORK POINTS

All Orks begin play with 1 Ork Point (which can be abbreviated OP). This lowly point is about all the good will that starting Orks have garnered from fearsome Krom.

During play, PCs can earn more Ork Points. If you've played other roleplaying games, you are probably thinking that OPs are like experience points. Yes and no. Like experience points, OPs can be used to make your Ork stronger and better. However, experience points are usually handed out after the game, as a general reward for the adventure just played. This sort of

system is far too rational for *Ork!* Since Orks are short sighted, selfish, and in constant need of instant gratification, Ork Points reflect these characteristics.

Whenever a player does something that's especially Orky, the GM should award him an Ork Point immediately. Don't make a note to remember it later, or keep a tally for each player. Just say, "You are funny, 1 Ork Point," and move on with the game. This may sound completely arbitrary. That's because it is! Like Krom, the GM can dispense his favors as he sees fit. You can choose to reward roleplaying, sneaky dealings, good tactics, excessive brutality, or anything else you deem worthy of reward.

The idea here is that Ork Points will be given away and spent fluidly. The points should fly fast and furious, which should encourage everyone to get in on the act. Ork Points are your best carrot, so make sure you use them.

LOSING ORK POINTS

GMs do not usually take Ork Points away. However, in cases of extremely unOrkish activity, Krom can remove his favor from the offending Ork. For instance, if an Ork sat down in a field of flowers to gaze upon their beauty, he would immediately lose an Ork Point. Such rank sentimentality has no place in the World of Orkness!

SPENDING ORK POINTS

Now comes the good part, spending Ork points. These handy critters have several excellent uses. A player can spend an Ork Point at any time to:

1. Add an extra die to a skill use attempt.
2. Add an extra die to his Meat while inflicting damage.
3. Add an extra die to his Bones while resisting damage.
4. Reroll a failed attempt at skill use.

You can decide to use options 1-3 after the initial die roll has been made. For example, you make a Run roll of 3D8 and it comes up short. You can then spend an Ork Point to add another D8 to that roll. Note that the additional die is always of the same type as that of your skill or attribute.

But wait, there's more! You can also use Ork Points to increase your skills. This involves thinking ahead, which is not exactly an Orkish trait. That being the case, you can raise only one skill each session. Once you've earned enough Ork Points to raise what you want, you might as well spend the rest during the course of the game. Ork points are meant to be spent like cash, not hoarded like jewels.

It costs X OP to increase a skill by 1, where X is the skill level you'll have after the increase. For instance, if you have a 3D8 Fight, it'll cost you 4 Ork Points to raise that to 4D8. No skill can be raised higher than 5 without the use of magic or the intervention of Krom.

RISING ATTRIBUTES

What about raising attributes, then? We're sure your players will be begging you for that little perk. However, saving up Ork Points for a big purchase like that is decidedly unOrkish. If you want to allow attributes to go up, we suggest a different system. Simply pick a number of sessions the PCs in your game must survive before they can increase one attribute by one die type (for instance, from D8 to D10). Since you don't want a bunch of Orks walking around with Meat scores of D20, we suggest a minimum of ten sessions to earn such a bonus. This way you reward the PCs for surviving in the World of Orkness without encouraging them to hoard Ork Points like greedy Squishy Men.

MAGIC IN THE CAMPAIGN

While rare, magic still plays an important part in an *Ork!* campaign. First, there are the

shamans, whose command of arcane forces gives them hold over Ork society. Second, there are the magic items, totems, and tattoos, which scheming Orks can harness to increase their own power. The information that follows falls firmly into the "GM Only" camp. Players caught peeking at this section should be forced to wash down sea urchin sushi with prune juice.

SHAMANIC MAGIC

By now you've heard a great deal about shamans and magic. But what can they do exactly? That's entirely up to you. You see, if we broke shamanic magic down into particulars, providing spell lists and power limitations, your weasely players would sneak a peek at the pertinent section sooner or later, threats of sea urchin notwithstanding. They would plan their use to power, knowing exactly what shamans can and cannot do. Clearly, that is no good.

The shaman is the GM's character to do with as he pleases. The shaman can be used to advance the plot, torture the PCs, hand out rewards, cause inter-party rivalry, or anything else you need him to do. His real motives should always be mysterious, and so should his magic. The PCs should never really know what the shaman is capable of. He may seem incredibly powerful on one occasion and nearly impotent on another. This should encourage an atmosphere of suitable paranoia among the PC Orks.

Most of the time, the shaman's magic can be handled in narrative fashion ("The shaman creates a sheet of fire that prevents the Squishy Men from following you to your village"). Those times when you feel the need to roll some dice, assume that the shaman has a Magic skill of 5 and a Mojo of D8 or better.

MAGIC FOR PCS

Now just because shamans have the corner on magic doesn't mean they get to have all the

fun. PCs can gain access to magic as the campaign progresses. It'll usually start with small things, like fetishes or magic totems. As the PCs become more renowned Orks, they can gain gifts like magic tattoos and enchanted weapons. Of course, in the World of Orkness, nothing is without peril.

Magic can be powerful but it can also be destructive, temperamental, and ornery. Basically, no magic works 100%. There is always a chance that something terrible will go happen, and this is one of the reasons that common Orks fear magic. If you saw your best friend's blood turn into strawberry jam, you'd be a little gunshy too.

As you may recall, every Ork has a skill called Magic. This skill is extremely important for any Ork who wants to use funky magic stuff. Whenever an Ork tries to use magic, be it a Troll tooth fetish or a magical carp tattoo, he must make a Magic skill roll. Like all other rolls in *Ork!*, this is an opposed test. Each item or enchantment lists the Krom Dice rolled



when an Ork attempts activation. For example, a simple fetish might have Krom Dice of 2D4, while a powerful weapon would have 4D8.

At first, using magic seems like just another skill test. The difference is that messing with magic is far more risky than swinging your axe. The Krom Dice already reflect the capriciousness of fate but magic takes matters to whole new level. When a player rolls *all ones* on his Magic skill test, something terrible, strange, and arbitrary *always* happens. He may turn into a pinecone. The moon may go dark. An Elvis impersonator may parachute into the forest. These occurrences can be as great or as minor as the GM requires.

Here are some random results to get you thinking:

1. Weapon explodes
2. All dead enemies turn into brain-hungry zombies
3. A nearby tree comes to life and starts attacking the player
4. PC shrinks to Squishy Man size
5. Flying Monkeys carry player off
6. A hungry Troll crashes through the underbrush!
7. Player grows extra head
8. A gift from Krom—a fifteen foot tall metal Sour Man—falls from the sky and will pursue player to ends of the World of Orkness unless destroyed
9. Earthquake!
10. An extra sun/moon appears in sky. Things get blindingly hot/player turns into a werewolf
11. The player loses every attribute except one, which becomes staggeringly acute
12. PC explodes

On the other hand, fate can smile on an Ork with good mojo. Whenever the player rolls the *maximum possible* on his dice, something good *always* happens. Often, this will mean the reversal of something bad that happened to another player (for example the reconstitution of an exploded Ork.)

1. Something that *should* explode *doesn't*
2. Player grows wings
3. A Squishy Man crashes through the underbrush smelling of marinade!
4. Sun goes away!
5. Nearby enemies fall asleep
6. Player grows two extra arms
7. Local Shaman explodes!
8. All of player's attributes get bumped up to a higher dice level—except one, which vanishes entirely
9. PC gains a sudden understanding of the world—this fades within a week
10. The next troll the player strikes turns into a pine cone; but the next pinecone the player steps on turns into a troll
11. Player doubles in size
12. Water gets PC drunk

MERE COMES THE STUFF!

Assuming your players are willing to chance using magical goodies (you'll increase the chances if you "forget" to share the preceding rules with them) there are a variety of trinkets you can throw their way. What follows are some examples, but do not take this as a definitive list. Don't look for a chart either. If you can't decide on an appropriate reward for your loyal players without resorting to a chart, you're probably not as smart as you think you are.

ONE SHOTS

The most common magic items are One Shots. As the name indicates, these are items that only work once, like potions.

Groot Balm: This simple balm is made of ground groot, pig's blood, and other Secret Shamanic Ingredients. One jar spread over an Ork's wounds will heal him by two wound levels instantly. Shamans keep tight control of Groot Balm and only grant it to their favorites.

Krom Dice: 1D6

Heart of Orkness: Many Orks believe that you can gain the strength of your enemy by eating his heart. Most of the time, this practice simply supplies an Ork with a good meal. However, sometimes Krom smiles on a strong Ork warrior and real mojo ensues. When the GM deems it appropriate, an eaten heart can temporarily give an Ork a +5 bonus on all Meat rolls. This extra strength lasts for 1D10 rounds.
Krom Dice: 1D10

Garg! Brew: No one really wants Garg! Brew. After all, it makes you blow up! Sneaky shamans sometimes slip this mickey into an Ork's ale (usually right before a battle, unless the shaman is just feeling mean). The brew makes an Ork Garg! in approximately twenty minutes. The Ork's Meat and Bones are increased to D20, and he goes completely insane, attacking anything in sight. After 2D10 rounds of mayhem, the Ork explodes. Time for a new character!
Krom Dice: 1D4 (it's all too easy to go Garg!)

MAGIC TOTEMS

Most Orks wear fetishes of some kind: eagle feathers, Squishy Man scalps, things like that. Being a superstitious lot, Orks believe that these fetishes have magical power. Of course, most do not. Those fetishes that have been enchanted by shamans or just have innate magical power are known as Magic Totems. These totems usually have powers related to their form. For instance, a piece of giant cockroach shell may give you magical protection.

Magic Totems can be used at will. However, they will not function for D4 hours after a failed attempt.

Troll Tooth: This totem is worn on a string around the neck. Getting a Troll Tooth is trouble enough, but finding a magic one is even harder. As every Ork knows, Trolls are strong! The wearer of a Troll Tooth can increase his Meat die by one type (for instance,

from D6 to D8) for the duration of one battle.
Krom Dice: 2D6

Cured Foot: Most dead Squishy Men go right into the cooking pot, but sometimes a shaman will claim the feet for his own. He then skins them, creating a nice little rug out of those hairy feet. This Cured Foot makes a great toupee, and it also has a bit of magic. Squishy Men are great runners (they have to be, to avoid being eaten by Orks) and an Ork with this totem can gain a little of that speed for himself. A successful use of this totem increases the Ork's Run skill by 1 for ten rounds.
Krom Dice: 1D8

Hawk's Eye: Shamans take the eyes of slain hawks and encase them in resin. These totems are then affixed to helmets or just tied around the head. A successful use of the Hawk's Eye increases the Ork's Eyeball skill by 2 for 2D6 rounds.

Krom Dice: 1D12

MAGIC TATTOOS

The real problem with totems is that you are limited by the body parts you can scrounge up. The shamans solved this little problem with the invention of the Magic Tattoo. As mentioned previously, these tattoos take a long time to create and they are incredibly painful for the receiving Ork. Nonetheless, they have potent mojo and are much sought after by power hungry Orks.

A Magic Tattoo will always be the gift of a shaman. The process takes 1D4 weeks, during which time the receiving character is unavailable for adventuring. At the end of the process, the shaman rolls his Mojo vs. the Ork's Bones. If the shaman wins, the tattoo is enchanted. If the Ork wins, he just got a pretty tattoo with no magical power.

Most tattoos can be activated three times a day (and yes, if you try and fail that counts).

While this does make totems more flexible, the tattoos are more powerful. In truth, the shamans probably could enchant the tattoos so they could work more often, but they don't for their own protection. No point in making an Ork mighty enough to topple you from power, now is there?

Sun Tattoo: Orks hate the sun, but recognize its power. It am big and hot! This tattoo is quite large and covers the whole of the Ork's back. Once enchanted, it fills the Ork with the power of the sun. He can use his Mojo to throw bolts of fire from his hands. This really freaks Squishy Men out, especially when used to light their homes and gardens on fire. The bolts have a range of sixty feet and do D20+4 damage. The Ork must use his Twitch skill to hit what he's aiming at, but no matter what something is getting lit on fire.

Krom Dice: 3D8

Iron Bird: Many years ago, an Ork shaman witnessed a jumbo jet fall into the World of Orkness. It cruised along for a few minutes before crashing in a terrific fireball. The



shaman was so impressed with the "iron bird" that he made it into a tattoo. An Ork with an Iron Bird Tattoo can fly for 3D6 rounds for each use. However, the GM should secretly roll the time he can remain airborne. Should the Ork be flying too high when the magic runs out, he'll plummet to a spectacular end. On the upside, the Ork can fly at 200 feet per round. That am fast!

Krom Dice: 3D6

Gorgon Tattoo: This is an old shaman trick. When threatened by a rising Ork, offer him a tattoo in recognition of his power. But when the tattoo is complete, it turns the Ork to stone! The process is the same for a regular tattoo, so the Ork has a chance to escape the tattoo's effects (when making his Bones roll vs. the shaman's Mojo). Otherwise, the whole village will marvel at the incredible likeness of the new statue.

Krom Dice: n/a

MAGIC WEAPONS AND ARMOR

What fantasy game would be complete without magical weapons and armor? These range from mighty artifacts of bygone ages to minor shamanic enchantments. Like other magical items, these babies must be activated. In other words, they are far less reliable than your players might like. The most common types of weapon and armor simply inflict or prevent extra damage. Wackier examples follow.

The Spear of Bolg: Bolg was a famous Ork warrior, well known for going completely berserk in battle. His spear is a mighty weapon in the hands of an Ork powerful enough to use it. Once per battle, the owning Ork can call upon the spear's powers. After scoring a hit but before doing damage, the Ork can try to activate the weapon. If successful, spear starts spinning in the Ork's hands, turning into a giant corkscrew. This causes great gouts of blood to fly everywhere, much to the delight of allied Orks, and inflicts +10 bonus damage.

Krom Dice: 2D8

Sneaky Mail: Chain mail is great when you can get it, but its jingling can be a real impediment to sneaky Orks. One enterprising shaman found a solution. He wove reeds through the mail to dampen the sound, and then enchanted the mail so that it would camouflage its wearer. Sneaky Mail is no more protective than ordinary chain mail, but twice a day the wearer can add 2 dice to his Sneak skill for 2D20 rounds.

Krom Dice: 2D6

The Grovel Stick: This short staff is carved with strange shamanic symbols and has mojo written all over it. It can be used as a club that inflicts +1 damage but that is not its main function. No, the grovel stick is not an ordinary weapon of war. Its function is to remind upstart Orks who the boss is. The fact that it also works on Squishy and Sour Men is a big plus. If the wielder of the Grovel Stick hits an opponent in hand to hand combat, he can choose to activate the magic rather than inflict damage. If the magic works, the victim falls to the ground and grovels uncontrollably for 1D4 rounds. Never mind that Orks can't understand Squishy Men, groveling transcends language. The Grovel Stick can be used three times a day.

Krom Dice: 3D6

OTHER MAGIC

The previous examples are just a taste of what you can with magic. With the Magic skill and the Krom Dice mechanic, you can come up with all sorts of crazy stuff. Just make sure you don't give the players items that work too often or too reliably. In the World of Orkness, you never know if your magic feather is going to blow up in your face. It's best to keep it that way.

RUNNING AN ORK GAME

To run a successful game of *Ork!* you need to hit the right tone. Two things are worth remembering:

1. Don't take yourself too seriously.

2. Don't get hung up on the rules.

Ork! is meant to be a "beer and pretzels" sort of RPG, the kind you'll play on a night when no one wants to be serious. You should expect and indeed foster an anarchic atmosphere. The system has been designed to be simple and easy. Even so, you may be tempted to consult this book for rules during a game. With rules this light, it'll rarely be worth your time. Make an arbitrary ruling and get on the game. Pacing is more important than the rules.

THE CAMPAIGN

With all the infighting among Orks, you may be wondering if it's even possible to run a campaign in the traditional sense. The answer, of course, is yes, but an *Ork!* campaign has some particular constraints. First and foremost is the fact that your players are likely to try to kill each other with alarming frequency. While this would be the death knell of many an RPG, in *Ork!* it is to be expected. You may have noticed that the healing rules are rather generous and this is why. Your average PC can take an axe to the head and be back in action in a couple of days. This allows the PCs to have their fun without forcing them to create new characters every hour or so.

Even with quick healing, though, it would seem that the average group of Orks would not have the "party unity" common in other RPGs. How can you run a game with any sort of plot if all the characters are running off to do their own thing all the time? We find the answer in an unlikely place: Communism.

The player characters start the game very low on the Ork totem pole. They are either Gunks or newly named Orks. In either case, they are scum to the rest of the tribe. The PCs have but one advantage and that is their collective power. Alone, each Ork is doomed to a life of

abuse and an early death. Together, they might get somewhere.

Does this mean the PCs shouldn't fight among themselves? Of course not! It does mean that larger outside threats can keep them together when it counts, though. Imagine your players are like the pre-Revolutionary Bolsheviks. While they were struggling against the Tsar and his secret police, all the old commies worked together. They had to, or they would have never seized power. Once they were in control, though, the bickering began, and once Lenin bought the farm all hell broke loose. Stalin ended up on top because he was the most ruthless and the biggest weasel.

The most obvious parallel here is with the tribe's shaman. He is the old order, waiting to be pulled down by a bunch of tough, young Orks. The PCs have to face a number of obstacles before they can take the shaman on. First there are other groups of young Orks to deal with, then the older warriors. All this while dealing with outside threats like Squishy Men and Trolls. There may also be an Ork warlord or two in the way. At long last though, the PCs may succeed in ousting the shaman and taking over their village.

Once the PCs are in power, a couple of things may happen. There may be a period like the Russian Civil War, in which everyone works together to expand the influence of the Revolution. In Ork terms, the PCs could try to take over other Ork villages and make a United Ork Front to fight the Squishy and Sour Men. As long as everyone can agree on who plays Lenin, this can lead to a long and satisfying campaign. The shorter way out is to skip up to the post-Lenin period. With the shaman dead, one of the PCs must replace him. At this point, all that pent up antagonism and Orkishness can spill forth as your players fight it out for supremacy. This should be extremely entertaining, and will probably lead to the wrap up of the campaign. When only one PC is left

standing, the campaign will have run its course. Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.

And hey, Trotsky died with an ice pick in his skull. What an Orkish way to go!

Now that you are suitably armed with a campaign battle plan, you can begin to think about the adventures you want to inflict on your players. As the campaign gets going, adventures will begin to suggest themselves, particularly as you map out the village antagonisms. In the meantime, you get some ideas from our next section: Adventure Seeds.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Am life easy? No!

—Famous Shaman Admonishment

Left to his own devices, the average Ork could come up with some pretty grand adventures. Investigating mysterious deposits in his nostrils, for instance, or throwing turds at the wall to see if they stick. But, as the GM, you am have to think big. The world is a big, scary place, and it's your job to kick the Orks out into it.

To give you some starting points, here are some seeds for adventures (to be scattered carelessly, trampled underfoot, gnawed by lizards, and, finally, urinated on):

You Are In Army Now!

An Ork, dealing with a Sour Man? Strange but true. The local shaman has been promised powerful voodoo by a big-time Dark Lord. All he's got to do is supply a contingent of Orks to help the Dark Lord wage a war against some other Sour Men. Roar, roar, march, march. But the players quickly discover that there's more to this war than they learned at first: The Dark Lord is trying to find a group of Squishy Men who have stolen a very secret, very dangerous magical ring. And, like stupid quacking Squishy Men, they am try to blow it up in hot mountain—unless the players can snatch it first.

You Am Hurry Up and Wait!

Shamans have booty, and they know how to hide it—usually, deep in caves infested with giant spiders and free of greedy Ork fingers. But lately the local high priest has been getting some disturbing news. Sour Men have been rampaging through the local labyrinths, hauling off buckets of righteous Ork boodle. The Shaman doesn't want to spill the secrets on his stash, but he knows he can't let the skimming go on. So he finds some trusted dupes and levels with them: Sour Men am been killing his pet giant spiders. You am protect spiders! Needless to say, eventually the players stumble across some locked boxes and secret rooms down there in the dark...

You Am Pay Wages of Fear!

As every good Ork knows, things have a habit of falling from the sky. This time, it's a big square box loaded with things that make fancy little Squishy Man sounds. The shaman takes a peek and knows there's something intriguing here. So intriguing, a shaman in a village over the mountains decides to trade him some powerful voodoo for the contents. Your shaman agrees, and sends his trusted Orks on a mission to deliver the crate. It's too big to haul, so he gives you a cart and two of his stoutest razorbacks. His only instructions: You am keep box shut! And you no am break what am inside! If he knew the kind of mischief the

players would get into—and, of course, if they could read—he might've scratched off the only word on the box: NITROGLYCERIN.

When You Am Ork You Am Ork All The Way!

On a Duck Festival Day raid deep in a cheery Squishy Man hamlet, about to plunge his axe into one of the wee folk, one of the players is struck by the most accursed sensation he has ever experienced. It feels like a stomachful of broccoli. It feels like a Giant Cockroach clawing at his spleen.

It am love!

Yes, forbidden love—the inexplicable sympathy of Ork for Squishy Man. Try as he might, the Ork will not be able to resist the urge to gather up his erstwhile prey and feed her tender garden slugs, sing her *chansons de guerre*, and bash in many, many heads to impress her.

The possibilities are endless. The player could attempt to move into the Squishy Man village—while the rest of the gang tries to drag him away, or steal him back in a daring raid. The player could try to smuggle the Squishy Man woman into the Ork village. Or the player could return home reluctantly, and sneak back for a midnight rendezvous. In any case, the Squishy Man will be hornified ... but not unmoved...



You Am Only Live Twice!

A tribe of Sour Men has a valuable magical artifact that the local shaman is jonesing for. A seige of the Sour Man castle proves ineffective—the Sour Men have powerful weapons and the Orks are repelled. So the local shaman, smarting from this disgrace, comes up with another plan: get a team of crafty and loyal (well, okay, maybe just loyal) Orks and send them in on a commando raid. Can a team of Orks break into a castle, sneak around and steal something? Well, it'll be fun to watch...

There Am No Business Like Show Business!

The shaman sends the players to capture an animal that's been seen around the village—big white horse with horn! While they're hunting the beast, the players are hit with some funky mojo and knocked unconscious. When they wake up, they're all in separate cages! Cages on wheels! They've been captured—along with big white horse with horn—by a traveling circus of Sour Men, and made to perform in horribly degrading costumes. The Sour Men have powerful potions that keep the Orks in line ... now if only they could get off the juice somehow and escape...

For Ork Am The Bell Toll!

On their way back from a great battle, the players come upon a really, really big ditch. In days gone by, powerful and wise shamans built a bridge across the ditch. It has fallen into ruin, but is still basically passable. When the players try to cross it, though, they discover trouble: A fat, ugly Troll has taken up residence beneath it, and demands payment to cross the mighty Ork structure! Can the players outwit the Troll? Or will they have to send the bridge crashing down on his foul head?

Look Who Am Talking!

All at once, the players begin to undergo the agonizing process of Ork reproduction—the Urg. But, just as the pustules begin breaking out, they subside. The players consider themselves lucky—until they realize one pustule

remains, burrowing deep inside their heads. The bloated sacs begin talking to them, driving them mad with hideous screeching voices, telling them to travel far out of the forest, into the great Cockroach Plains. Someone—or something—has placed those very special Gunks in the players' heads ... and only powerful magic will get them out...

You Am Go In Cage! Cage Am Go In Water! Squid Am In Water!

Pickings have been slim in the forest lately, so the Orks have been relying on their vast beds of river cucumbers to tide them over. But all Orks venturing into the water have been massacred! The shaman decides the culprit is a Giant Squid, and sends the players to destroy the beastie at all costs.

You Am Gimme That Old-Time Religion!

A crew of weirdly-dressed Orks stomp into the village and begin preaching about Krom! The Orks have been converted to the Sour Man's version of Krom worship, and want to bring the village around, too. The local shaman ain't too happy, calls out the interloping shaman, and they fight to a standstill. The new Orks start setting up a church on the edge of the village, and the shaman sends in the players as spies: Pretend to convert, then figure out where the priest's powerful Mojo comes from.

They Am Making It Out Of People!

The players return from a big battle, still floating on Groot. But they begin to grow suspicious when the shaman begins calling away their war buddies—and they don't return. They quickly uncover the truth: The local supply of Groot has grown too thin to be sustained, and there are lots more campaigns on the way. So the shaman is getting groot the only way he can: distilling it from the bodies of Orks who have consumed it! The PCs must either kill the shaman or find a new supply of the plant to save their skins...

Me Am Dream Of Genie!

On the eve of a great battle with a Goblyn clan, the players are getting ready to rock when suddenly appears ... the Little Man With a Hat! The sprite tells them their enemies have learned a powerful trick: how to hypnotize Trolls to do their bidding. All the Orks will be slaughtered, the Little Man says. But if the players learned how to hypnotize Trolls first, they could turn the tide of the battle and win great glory for themselves. There's only one catch—the players have to bring the Little Man a live Troll to practice on.

Perhaps You Am Confuse Me With Someone Else!

The local shaman calls the players into his shack for a mission. While in there, he mixes the wrong potions and blows up! The players, of course, jump at this chance to take over—but just as they start to fight over who gets what, an emissary from another Ork village appears. The shaman there has a long feud with your village's former magic man. The emissary doesn't know who's who, however, and will tell the players that they have been formally challenged to a shaman's duel, in the other village, at midnight tomorrow. If they don't show, they will be turned to tapeworms.

It Am Mad, Mad, Mad World!

A dying Ork stumbles into the village. The players stand around and laugh at him. But if they try to stomp him, he offers a wonderful secret: He knows of a massive cache of treasure over the great river, past the creepy mountains. He gives them some Rebus-like directions (like "Look for the giant 'M'") and croaks. The players dash for the cash—but soon learn that a similar band of every other species in Orkland is hot on its trail too. The result? Gruesome hilarity!

Who Am Ork, Anyway?

Before the adventure, the GM chooses one player for an arbitrary act of Krom: The player, unbeknownst to the others, is actually a Squishy Man magician disguising himself with powerful spells. Then the local shaman figures this out and calls the players into his hut. The magic is too powerful for him to see through, so he devises a series of Ork endurance challenges to weed out the phony. The players will have to participate in every foul enterprise of Ork life—from braining Gunks to maggot-licking to duck-squashing.

FOES OF ORKDOM

Orks are forced to share the world with many varieties of people and monsters. Some of them they want to exterminate, others they want to avoid. Presented to you for your reading pleasure is this gallery of Ork enemies, from the fearsome to the foolish. Each entry includes game stats for a typical member of the species. You can make opponents easier or harder to kill by monkeying with their attributes and skills, or by changing their equipment. Note that only the most common skills are listed.

CREEPING CRUDS

Meat: D8

Bones: D6

Twitch: D6

Mojo: D8

Skills: 4D6 Chuck, 3D8 Climb, 2D6 Eyeball, 1D8 Fight, 3D6 Sneak

Stuff: Toxic goo (DR 6)



"What am me step in?"

—Ork Saying

Every Ork is intimately familiar with the more repellent products of Mother Nature—in fact, the average Ork has produced much more than his share of them. But even Orks are left bleary-eyed and gasping by the Creeping Crud.

The Crud is a sort of sentient mucus—a greenish-transparent plasma that moves slowly but surely, creeping along the ground, trees, ceilings, whatever's convenient. Cruds love caves, but they have been known to venture out in search of adventure. Hobbies include: pretending to be a pool of sputum, oozing off tree limbs, and digesting Orks slowly and gorily.

Yes, the Crud has many sources of food, but loves none more than a nice juicy Ork. Thus abomination will often place itself in a path that Orks are known to frequent, hoping one will be unwary enough to move in for a closer look. Often, the Crud will suspend jewels or small animals in its murky body, to further tempt the gullible. When the Ork gets close enough, look out: The Crud will leap whole from the ground and surround the Ork in a putrid, placental sheathe. Then it's slow digestion time! Cave-dwelling Cruds will pull the same stunt, except they'll often drop from the ceiling instead.

The initial Crud attack is resolved with the Chuck skill, and represents the Crud hurling itself through the air. Once gobbing all over an opponent, the Creeping Crud is very easy to hit, as is reflected in its low Fight skill. What's the catch? Any damage done to a Creeping Crud while it is attacking someone will also be inflicted on the victim. To make matters worse for the target of the Crud's attack, he auto-

matically takes damage from the Crud every round until the creature is dispersed. On the upside, the Creeping Crud can only attack one person at a time.

How do you kill a Crud without killing your friend in the process? Cold! The devilish beasts like things nice and warm. Just how do a bunch of brickhead Orks generate cold? We'll leave that to the players to figure out, but if they do they'll find any application of cold causes the Creeping Crud to drop right off its victim.

GIGANT SQUID

Meat: D12

Bones: D12

Twitch: D12

Mojo: D4

Skills: 2D12 Eyeball, 2D12 Fight, 3D12 Smash, 3D12 Sneak, 4D12 Swim

Stuff: Only, big, big tentacles (DR 5), rubbery hide (PR 2)

In the perverse, magic-blasted world of the Ork, many things end up where they simply shouldn't be. Case in point: the eldnutch Giant Squid, which, instead of haunting the depths of the ocean, pops up in even the shallowest bodies of fresh water—including your average wading pool and stream. And the unholy physical laws of the Ork universe make the hoary beast virtually invisible until it chooses to surface and attack. An Ork could stomp on a puddle for hours and never see the first trace of a Giant Squid—then find himself ambushed by a mass of tentacles when he turned his back.

Fighting a Giant Squid is a big pain in the ass. These slippery blokes have up to eight tentacles, each of which can fight a different opponent with no penalty. When enough damage has been done to push it to the See

You in Hell level, it'll slip beneath the water and disappear. Driving off a Giant Squid is about the best you can hope for without a full fledged underwater expedition.

GOBLYNS

Meat: D6

Bones: D6

Twitch: D6

Mojo: D6

Skills: 2D6 Chuck, 2D6 Eyeball, 2D6 Fight, 2D6 Grab, 2D6 Run, 2D6 Sneak

Stuff: Big Sword (wielded in two hands), Leather Armor

Goblins are smaller and weaker than Orks, but incredibly, they are also green. They exist primarily as roving hordes of separate clans, each clan having a sworn enemy in another. This creates a constant state of inter-Goblin warfare, which pretty much takes up all their free time. These clan wars have deeply affected the way Goblin society operates. Because of this, the Goblins have developed many paranoid, savage, and fascinating customs.



Goblyn clans are identified by their colorful kilts. Different colored plaids are the most popular design, followed by patterns of little duckies and bunnies. Each clan elects a daringly defiant way to wear their kilts—some of them backwards! This blatant lack of fashion sense drives many Goblyn clans to war. Each clan also adopts a hideous, tuneless musical instrument on which to compose frightful war songs. Goblyn war songs are very catchy, and many of their opponents find themselves humming these tunes in spite of themselves!

No one is certain what started the inter-clan conflicts. Spontaneous battles have broken out over bad table manners, the number three, and the so-called barbarity of midget wrestling. What is known is that no good reason is needed, the feisty Goblyns are simply always itching for a fight. Goblyns are adept at creating inflammatory swear words, and speak in a salty, profane tongue.

Among the most heinous of Goblyn customs is the shrinking of heads. After an enemy is slain, his head is cut off and treated with a special mixture of herbs and spices. This

mixture, and plenty of sunlight, causes the head to wither and shrink. Shrunken heads are worn as accessories, often hanging off a belt, as a necklace, or as a pair of earrings. The more heads displayed, it is thought, the greater the prowess of the warrior who wears them.

Mistrustful of outsiders, Goblyns seldom travel out past their lands unless necessity dictates they must. They manufacture their own goods, and have a small understanding of science. Ork shamans value Goblyn tongues as protective charms, which has led to the killing and eating of many a Goblyn. Great animosity now exists between Orks and Goblyns, which the Goblyns only make worse by failing to worship Krom. They follow no god, until one comes along and proves that it is indisputably on the side of their clan.

HORSERATS

Meat: D10

Bones: D12

Twitch: D6

Mojo: D6

Skills: 2D6 Eyeball, 2D10 Fight, 3D10 Jump,

3D12 Run, 3D6 Scent, 2D6 Sneak

Stuff: Fangs and claws (both have a Damage Rating of 4)



Were these unspeakable amalgams the product of some mad Ork genius—or a depraved cosmic jest by Krom himself? As large as a stallion, but with the hideous features of a rodent, these creatures are among the most feared in Orkdom—an earthly parallel to the legendary Flying Monkey.

Thank Krom they usually travel alone. Horserats go wherever there's trouble. They appear out of nowhere before great battles, sensing big pickings ahead. They slither through villages on moonless nights, stealing away children, and sometimes adults, in their

PINECONES

"Some of my best friends am pinecones."
—Ork Saying

Sure, a pinecone's a pinecone. They fall off trees. Except that transformation to a pinecone is one of Krom's favorite punishments. So the pinecone has achieved a unique status in Ork culture. Many Orks take out their aggression on the humble seed carriers—Those am Orks that Krom am have touched! Why am Krom not touch me?—stomping them pitilessly around the forest. The occasional sensitive Ork takes a more philosophical view, collecting the cones and sniffing for the palpable Ork vibe that comes off them. Shamans scoff at both groups, but secretly conduct hideous experiments on the cones...

loathsome overbite. They are just as likely to be found in caverns as woods; slithering through bogs is just as common as galloping across plains.

The Horserat nest will be extremely well-hidden—usually carved into the rear of a secluded cavern, and well-covered with artfully strewn debris. Inside will be at least a dozen of the foul creatures and an immobile—and very, very hungry—momma sucking her young. The babies will do anything to protect their home. Get out them halberds, boyos!

The Horserat likes to ambush, and work in shadows. If attacking a party, it will try to suss out the leader and drag off that poor sucker first then thin the number of opponents to a more manageable three or so. After that, all-out pouncing commences. The creature has an extremely well-developed sense of smell, and prodigious fangs—it will make biting attacks against opponents, aiming for the head first. Its claws are also formidable; if an opponent resists a bite attack, the Horserat

will bring its paws to bear. And steer clear of the long rodent tail, which will whip the unwary twenty feet or more, usually against a nearby tree or boulder.

Before your party goes out slaughtering every Horserat it meets, be warned: There are some who consider the beast the Steed of Krom. Why, every Ork am have cousin who am heard story from reliable shaman-in-training about how Krom am train the First Horserat, and am keep it close in Great Krom Hall. And if Krom favors the horrid beast, what easier way to win the favor of the Biggest Ork of Them All than taming and riding one of them? And what easier way to get the Ork Upstairs ticked off than indiscriminately knocking off the appalling animals?

SOUR MEN

Meat: D8

Bones: D8

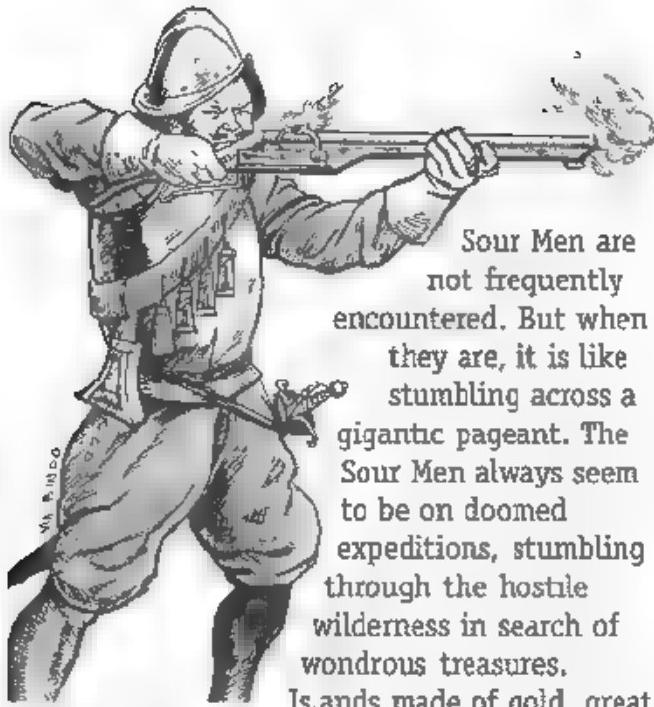
Twitch: D8

Mojo: D4

Skills: 2D8 Chuck, 2D8 Eyeball, 3D8 Fight, 2D8 Run, 2D8 Smash

Stuff: Sour Man Boomstick, Big Sword, Back and Breast Plate

They came from across the sea. They are taller than Squishy Men, and not as fat, but they are also pink. Some of them came in search of legendary cities made of gold. Others, to spread the word of Krom to the heathen savages of the New World. The Sour Men are a stern and severe people, and they are greedy to the core. According to their beliefs, they are the chosen people, and thus are free to exploit and enslave the other lesser races of the New World. Even their missionaries believe that only through forced conversion will these "barbarians" be made worthy. They are aided by their powerful "boomsticks," which shoot iron balls amid great gouts of smoke.



Sour Men are not frequently encountered. But when they are, it is like stumbling across a gigantic pageant. The Sour Men always seem to be on doomed expeditions, stumbling through the hostile wilderness in search of wondrous treasures.

Islands made of gold, great cities of gold, even people made of gold, these are the phantasmal fortunes they dream are hidden in the World of Orkness. Of course, we know that such things couldn't possibly exist ... or do we? During their explorations, the Sour Men travel with many horses, tents, larders, and servants. The Sour Men have been known to press weak Orks and Goblyns into slavery, using them for hard labor, and sometimes even as interpreters.

They are a brutal and reckless people, with little regard for life. It is not uncommon for many Sour Men to die while searching for fabulous treasure. Sour Men will try to climb dangerous mountains, cross unforgiving deserts, even load their entire caravan onto dubious rafts and sail treacherous rivers, zealously looking for gold. Many times only the remains of great expeditions have been found, slowly rotting in the dense jungles of the World of Orkness.

The other type of Sour Man may be even worse. They are fanatically devout missionaries, taking the word of Krom, or Cromus as they call him, to the ignorant, filthy foreigners of the New World. Setting up small churches and schools, they spread Krom's love through scripture and song. Their form of worship is ritualistic and solemn, full of rep-

titious prayers and gestures. It seems the subtlety of their religion is lost on many Orks, who are the worst converts the Sour Men have ever seen. Orks cannot sit still during service, nor does it seem they can memorize their catechism. And Orks always scream horribly whenever they are required to sing a hymn. However, the missionaries are a patient bunch, content with the knowledge that eventually, Krom's love will change the savage Orks into proper, righteous, and decent people.

Due to incredible language differences, the Sour Men have no idea that the Orks worship Krom as well. They regard Ork religion, what little of it there is, as pagan, superstitious, and crass. Ork idols of Krom are regularly destroyed, and magical totems are confiscated for research. (They end up under glass in a museum, somewhere in the Old World.) The Orks wonder how much farther the Sour Men can go before they evoke Krom's monstrous wrath and are obliterated forever.

SQUID HEADS

Meat: D8

Bones: D6

Twitch: D10

Mojo: D6

Skills: 2D10 Chuck, 3D10 Eyeball, 2D8 Fight,

3D10 Grab, 2D6 Run, 2D10 Sneak

Stuff: Crossbow, Tentacles (DR 3), Chainmail

"That bram-eater think he am pretty smart."

—Famous Ork Post-Battle Boast

For once, the Orks are right. The Squid Heads love eating their enemies' noodles, and they sure are smart. Smarter than Orks, anyway, maybe even smarter than shamans. Their brain-eating proclivities would seem to keep them out of Ork territory—not enough chow—but the Squid Heads love to investigate things. Like things Krom tosses out of the sky.



Anytime a magic item falls from the heavens, the Squid Heads will swoop down in a pack and try to nab the trinket. (And, unlike most shamans, they actually end up figuring out what the doodad does.) Anybody who gets in their way will find themselves the unenviable object of Squid Head attack. First, the tentacles flail and grab hold of their victim. Then, from the center of the mass of arms and suckers, comes a jet of blinding ink. After the opponent is disabled and strangled, the Squid Head will remove its hand-crafted pack of brain-cracking utensils (including skullcracker, scoop, and brain bib) and sit down to a leisurely meal.

The tentacle attack is resolved using the Fight skill as normal. If the tentacles hit, the Squid Head can make a special ink attack the next round. This is made using the Chuck skill vs. the victim's Fight. If the ink hits, the victim gets an eyeful of stinging ichor. For the next D4 rounds, the blinded foe suffers a 1 die penalty to any skill that involves seeing, such as Fight or Eyeball.

These brainy beasts have another hobby: slavery! They often form raiding parties, swoop

down on unsuspecting communities of all races, and bring them back to their secret cities to do unholy bidding. What goes on in these helish citadels is unknown; no Ork has ever escaped to tell the tale.

SQUISHY MEN

Meat: D6

Bones: D4

Twitch: D8

Mojo: D4

Skills: 3D8 Chuck, 2D8 Eyeball, 2D6 Fight, 3D4 Run, 2D8 Sneak

Stuff: Squishy Man Bow, Short Sword, Studded Leather Armor

Orks hate these fat little fellows with an unbridled passion. Squishy Men are the antithesis of everything that a good Ork stands for. They are, of course, short, chubby punk people, who love eating and gardening and carving little duck figures out of driftwood. They are peaceful and fun loving, and enjoy poetry, good fellowship, and song. Squishy Men make a habit of bathing and smelling nice, often like flowers. Their large, round eyes swell up and quiver with tears when they are upset. In the afternoon they drink tea and nibble on tiny, cinnamon flavored biscuits. All in all, they are a despicable people.

Squishy Men are obsessed with duck imagery, which often decorates their churches, gardens, and homes. In the summer, they hold a Duck Festival, where everyone puts on these adorable little shoes with webbed feet. The Orks always try to attack during the Duck Festival. However, like a cornered koala bear, Squishy Men will put up a good fight, defending their homes with rakes, lawn ornaments, spoons, butter dishes, and sometimes even a sword.

Squishy Men are notoriously good shots, and prefer to fight their enemies from far away. Hurling stones, or shooting tiny pointed

sticks, a group of determined Squishy Men could quite possibly repel an Ork attack. (A halfassed Ork attack, anyway). But the Squishy Men know their puny strength is no match for the brute force of an Ork invasion. So, being of a Scientific Nature, the Squishy Men have invented other, more effective ways of defending their homes.

We are talking about big ol' monster Siege Engines. The Squishy Men are adept at building terrifying machines of war, covered with spikes and armed with tiny cannons. These engines are more like little steam-powered tanks, as they are fully maneuverable and can be driven at speeds of up to eighty miles an hour. Stored in barns and other large, nondescript buildings, they can be fired up with a minimum of preparation. The preferred method of attack is to simply run things over, and let the spiked wheels grind up the Orks into a hideous mash of meat. (Which they *do not* spread on crackers.)

The other Squishy Man invention is a primitive form of the grenade. Small glass bottles are filled with a volatile chemical compound and corked. During battle, these bottles are thrown



at the enemy, and they detonate on impact. The explosions are usually small, but stronger batches have had a more deadly effect. Strangely, these grenades share many similarities with the Ork Groot Elixir. A typical Squishy Man grenade has a Damage Rating of 6.

TITANIC LIZARDS

Meat: D20

Bones: D20

Twitch: D8

Mojo: D8

Skills: 2D8 Eyeball, 3D20 Fight, 2D20 Run, 3D8 Scent

Stuff: Teeth and horns (DR 6), natural armor (PR 5)

When magi-physical perversity struck the world, it played havoc with time and space. Among the most inexplicable results: Dinosaurs walk again!

These terrible lizards are generally confined to isolated plateaus and desert islands, or enslaved in the aeries of Squid Heads. There are many varied types of dinosaurs, so we'll concentrate on their basic characteristics:

1. All Dinosaurs breathe fire. The one exception: Dinosaurs that have horns, such as Stegosauruses, shoot flaming rocks out of the horns. Both attacks have DR 10
2. All Dinosaurs fight each other, at the slightest provocation, to distraction
3. All Dinosaurs are hungry all the time, and they love to eat living bipeds more than anything else

What more do you need to know?

TROLLS

Meat: D20

Bones: D12

Twitch: D6

Mojo: D6

Skills: 2D6 Chuck, 2D6 Eyeball, 2D20 Fight,

1D20 Run, 3D6 Scent, 3D20 Smash

Stuff: Fist for smashing (DR 3)

Trolls are extremely large, horrible, ugly monsters that dwell under bridges and in dark caves. They are powerfully strong, with a mean temperament and a penchant for eating their prey while it's still alive and screaming. Trolls possess a digestive system that rivals the Ork in its ability to break down just about any substance there is, and they frequently test its mettle against the most foul cuisine they are inspired to eat. Cut open a Troll's stomach and you may find pieces of lava rock, electrical appliances, and some of the more rubbery species of killer shark.

When they are not hungry, Trolls spend their time sleeping. These monsters can sleep for days on end, and are often encountered snoozing away after a large lunch. It is not advisable to poke them with sticks, or jump up and down on them like a trampoline. Many Orks learn this valuable lesson only after it is too late. In fact, Trolls enjoy eating Orks very much, and they like to shove as many of them as can fit into their mouths all at once. Then, they'll slowly chew on the screeching, wriggling mass until it is quiet and stops moving. This part of the meal is considered an appetizer, and the Troll will venture forth in search of other delectable Orks to devour.

Unfortunately for Trolls, because they are incredibly stupid and have short attention spans, they almost never make it out of the cave for the second course. With a great yawn they collapse back into a stinking, sleeping



heap. Clever Orks take advantage of this time to kill the Troll. Slaying a Troll is a mighty victory, worthy of great boasting around the campfire. Troll skulls and bones are considered valuable properties, and may even be magical. This heroic occurrence is rare because most Orks never survive their first meeting with the fearsome Troll.

Trolls can sport a variety of interesting mutations. Some may have an extra arm, leg, or eye. Other Trolls can have multiple heads. Yes, sometimes those heads get into arguments with each other, resulting in painful decapitations and the eventual death of the Troll. It is also true that Trolls can regenerate, because it is expected of them to do so. To really kill a Troll, you have to chop off its head, stuff it with lemons, and bury it for twelve days. Then you must dig up the head, roast it for six to eight hours, and garnish with cranberry sauce. Mmm, mmm! Otherwise, even a seemingly dead Troll will come back to life D6 days after being slain. Oh dear!

These monsters prefer smashing their opponents into the ground with their mighty fists, but they sometimes use clubs as well. A few Trolls have figured out that large rocks are good for crushing people, and that it's also a lot of fun! They speak a guttural language similar to Ork, especially in the area of swearing. Trolls like to collect colorful things, and often have lots of junk lying about their lairs. They are fond of songbirds, who they allow to roost in the nooks and crannies of their homes. Finally, there are a few Clever Trolls, who lead wandering lives of adventure, excitement, and mayhem. Clever Trolls are fond of giant bows that shoot arrows a yard long.

WATER MONKEYS

Meat: D10

Bones: D8

Twitch: D8

Mojo: D4

Skills: 2D8 Eyeball, 2D10 Fight, 2D8 Sneak,
3D8 Swim

Stuff: Trident (DR 4)

Orks usually don't go near the water. But when they do, danger lurks!

The most visible of aquatic enemies are the fearsome Water Monkeys. These creatures, who look something like big, blue, stretched-out Sour Men, build surprisingly complex communities at the bottom of deep lakes, inland seas, and oceans. They live in the middle of piles of booty collected from sunken vessels—treasure chests of jewels and gems—and lounge around in huge clamshells.

The Monkeys rarely venture onto the surface. They are a basically peaceful lot, if unprovoked. They make their living by farming kelp, domesticating sea life, and other tedious pursuits. Occasionally a particularly wild band will pick off ships from below and loot their cargo.

The Orks generally cross paths with Water Monkeys only when a gift from Krom drops into a body of water. The local Shaman generally won't care how inaccessible the gift is; some Ork's gonna have to go get it.

But make no mistake: The Water Monkeys can go ape if their privacy is invaded. The Ork who sees a Water Monkey and lives is rare indeed—an Ork in water is already half dead. After an attack from the Water Monkeys' flashing tridents...

GO ORK GO!

Go Ork Go! is an introductory adventure written to familiarize new players with the *Ork!* roleplaying game.

Throughout this adventure you'll see text in boxes just like this one. We know this is quite the radical concept, but these are passages you can read to your players. If you'd rather make up something even more clever, go right ahead. Krom couldn't care less what you do, anyway.

In order to play this scenario, you will need the following:

- Dice. Lots and lots of dice.
 - Pencils and paper.
- Complete disregard for all that is decent and good.
- Some friends with the same disregard.

Got all that stuff? Good! Now, go Ork go!

THE ADVENTURE

To start: Have your players create their Orks. Everyone begins the adventure as a lowly Gunk. But they're all full grown and ready to join the tribe. Only one thing stands in their way. They don't yet have a name. Without a name, they am Gunk!

At long last, here comes a chance for them to do brave deeds, kill horrible Squishy Men, and earn a name that will strike fear into the hearts of all! If they survive, that is...

PART ONE: THE SKY AM FALLING!

"Look! Up there!"

"What am that thing?"

"It am falling from sky!"

"It am fall into woods over there!"

"Hmmm."

"Who am hungry?"

Last night, you am watch as a strange, shiny object drop out of sky, and land in woods far, far away. Then you am forget about it. This morning, all-powerful shaman am shamble over to Gunk Pit. He am come over to you and say, "Last night, strange thing am fall from sky. You remember?"

Of course they don't. The shaman bonks them on the head until they do. And then he says:

"Me am want you Gunks go into woods and bring strange thing back to me! Krom am drop strange thing from mighty fortress up in sky. Strange thing am must be Gift from Krom! If we no am take gift, Krom am get mad! Then we am all surely doomed!"

The shaman selects the strongest of the Gunks to lead the expedition. To the leader he says:

"Krom's gift from sky am very magical. You no am break. No am eat! You am make sure other Gunks no am break or eat strange thing too. If you do am break strange thing, me am get angry! Me am turn you into toad. Like this!"

The shaman growls and changes a nearby Gunk into a toad! Then another Gunk grabs the poor toad and swallows it whole!

"But ... if you am good little Gunks and you am bring back Krom's gift not broken, then perhaps ... perhaps me am give you name."

The shaman allows the Gunks to squeal with glee. Then he bonks them on the head.

"You am shut up now! Look here—me am have swords for you. You am take swords on dangerous expedition into great unknown."

"You am go! And no am forget your swords! Go. Now!"

Answer: You am move over! Ouch! He am on my side! Get over!

Once they are inside the Chevy, read the next paragraph.

Ooo! This am neat! There am little pokey things all over! Pokey things on the floor, pokey things all around! And part of the floor ... part of the floor am soft and bouncy! You am see treasure all around. Sparkly things, shiny things. And ... you am smell food. But where? Where am food?

The Gunks can use their Grab skill to search the car for stuff. There is a key (or "sharp little pokey thing") under the floor mat on the driver's side of the car.

In the glove compartment there is a pair of sunglasses (or "black pokey thing"). If any Gunk puts on the sunglasses in the daytime, the Sun disappears. If they put the sunglasses on at night, they are plunged screaming into a world of Eternal Darkness.

There is also an 8-Track player in the car. (This is a "big pokey thing." Individual 8-tracks are "little crunchy things.")

When the car starts, classic Seventies Rock booms out of the speakers.

Some possible songs to play:

Mississippi Queen by Mountain

Hooked on a Feeling by Blue Swede

Frankenstein by Edgar Winter Group

Iron Man by Black Sabbath

Orks love this stuff. They call it "big boom boom sounds." Turn it up, man!

The Gunks are going to get into the trunk sooner or later. In there are the following items:

1. A beach ball. This am "bouncy thing, with colors." Good to eat.
2. A beach umbrella. This am obviously "magic shield."

3. A beach towel. This am "warm, fuzzy thing."
4. A plastic cooler. This am "Treasure Chest!" Inside the cooler are baloney sandwiches (meat!) and bottles of grape soda. This stuff am "magic juice."
5. A tube of suntan lotion. This stuff am "goo." If any Gunk eats the suntan lotion, he will experience bizarre hallucinations. The Gunk will be able to see music and hear colors. Soon he will realize that we're all, like, part of the same cosmic egg, man. Trolls and Squishy Men are our friends. Everybody should love each other, man.
6. A spare tire. This am "flabby round thing." Also good to eat.
7. A tire iron. This am "metal pokey stick." Good to smash things.

Smart Orks will eventually figure out that the sharp little pokey thing goes into the ignition thingy. Roll lots of dice if you have to, but get them into that car.

From there, it's a few simple turns of the key and they're off!

PART FOUR: HARRRRRRRRGGGGGGHHHHH!!!

Right! Orks in a car! Here we go!

Smart Gunks should be able to figure out that one pedal makes car go fast, and other pedal makes car stop. This should involve a lot of crashing into things.

Steering the car is reasonably easy. The Gunks can use their Twitch stat or Ride skill to control the speeding vehicle.

However, *Smokey and the Bandit* type moves will require some big time dice rolling. We all know that Krom hates *Smokey and the Bandit*. So this should involve a lot more crashing into things.

Crashing through the walls of the barn is the simplest, most Ork-like way to get the Chevy out of the barn.

By now the rest of the Squishy Man village has turned out in extreme force to exterminate the Gunks. Read the next box to the players:

Lock! Squishy Men am everywhere! They am want to stop you from taking back Krom's Gift!

"La la la la la!" they am shout.

Then they am attack! Kill them!

Running over Squishy Men with the car will take a successful Ride roll. Every single Squishy Man attacked by the Chevy Malibu will be instantaneously destroyed.

Expect the car to soon be covered with limbs, blood, and gore. There is a very slim chance that a Smart Ork *might* be able to figure out how to use the windshield wipers.

It's also possible to drive through a Squishy Man house. Simply crash through one side of the cottage, drive around more or less in a straight line, and then crash out of the other side. Easy!

Now, we all know a Chevy Malibu can take an amazing amount of punishment. This car is

tough! The Squishy Men will try to kill the mighty Malibu with their puny bows and arrows. Ha ha ha! They am fools!

In desperation, the Squishy Men will break out the hand grenades. Think about it: Orks speed-ing around in a burning car. Cooooool! Any unfortunate Ork caught in the explosion would probably catch fire, and then other things in the car could catch fire, too!

At some point during the combat, the Gunks are probably going to accidentally drive into the woods and leave the burning Squishy Man village behind.

If they don't, send 'em out into the woods anyway.

PART FIVE: DEATH BY TROLL

You am drive Krom's Gift into woods. You am go real fast! Stupid trees am get knocked out of way! Little bunny rabbits go squish! You am go faster, Ork! Kill! Kill!

Then the car runs out of gas. In the middle of nowhere Far, far away from home. In the dark.



Maybe on the edge of a cliff.

Hey! Thing am stop! What am wrong? Stupid thing! You am go! Go now! Hmm. Thing am not go anymore. This am bad. You am broke Krom's Gift! You am better fix it now! Before all-powerful shaman am turn you into toad!

Sadly, there's no way to get this heap of junk running again. But let them try. Let them make lots of noise. Because nearby there is a terrible Troll, sleeping in his cave.

The Gunk racket wakes the Troll from his slumber. Then he smells something foul and loathsome... It's Science! Must destroy Science!

Say? What am that noise? It am sound like growling. And why am those trees fall down over there? What am that other sound? It am sound like big footsteps. What am make big footsteps? Oh, no! Am gigantic Troll! He am charging out of woods! He am come this way!

The first thing the Troll does is grab the car in his powerful hands and shake it savagely like a snow-globe. Think about all those poor Gunks, still trapped inside. Tsk sadly and reach for the damage dice.

Next, the Troll will eat the car. He begins with the tires. If the Gunks run around and jump up and down like the pesky, little Troll-appetizers that they are, the Troll will try to eat them instead.

Fight!!

Go ahead. Let 'em try and kill the Troll. Maybe they'll win. Who knows? Maybe they'll decide to run away. Who said the Run skill didn't come in handy?

A smart Ork may have figured out by now that there's no way they're getting this big metal thing back to the shaman. But there are plenty of other things around that could be Krom's Gift. Like an 8-track tape, or a bottle of grape soda.

PART SIX MURRAY FOR OUR GUNKS!

There are probably a lot of dead Gunks strewn all over the forest by now. Maybe the adventure's over. But figure whoever is left after the Troll battle somehow makes it back safely to the Ork village.

You am come home after long day of fighting Squishy Men and Trolls. It am feel good to be Ork! Here am come the shaman. He am look mad. He am say, "Where am Krom's Gift! You am give it to me now!"

Did they remember to bring something back?

If they didn't, the all-powerful shaman turns them all into toads.

"You no am have Krom's Gift! Stupid Gunks! Me am turn you all into toads! You am toad!" *Zap!* "Now you am also toad!" *Zap!* *Zap!* "Ha ha ha!! You am all toads now!"

It am true! The shaman am turn you into flabby toad! Oh, no! Here am come hungry Gunk! No! No am eat me! Oh, cruel world! Aaaaaaaggghhh!!!

That's the end for those Gunks.

If they did bring something back, read the following box:

"You am bring Krom's Gift! Let me see! Hmm. You am sure it not broken?"

Let 'em squirm for a few moments as the Shaman eyeballs them severely, then:

"Good work, little Gunks. Tonight, you am get names!"

That evening, the Naming Ceremony takes place in the village. The shaman appears, dressed in his outrageous costume. The Orks beat savagely on their drums.

Let the survivors sing their glorious song of bloodshed and woe! Remember the rule of the ceremony. If the song is no good, the Gunk dies!

After the song, the shaman bestows upon them their name. There is much shouting and cheering. Everybody gets drunk and fights.

PART SEVEN: THE DEAD MEET KROM!

Everybody gets drunk and fights except the dead Gunks, that is. They all appear together in the Kingdom of Krom!

You am wake up in Kingdom of Krom. Am gigantic place. Very big. Mists of time am float all over. Big torches am on walls. And there am Krom! He am on huge throne. Big crow on Krom's shoulder. Krom am look down on you. He am angry! Judgment Day am here!

Gunks who died bravely are sent to the Great Feast. Gunks who died cowardly are reincarnated as toadstools, Horserats, sea sponges, or pinecones.

So speaks the almighty Krom!

AFTERWORD

In 1993 I was living in New York City. I had moved to the Big Apple for college six years before and ended up staying until my career in the gaming biz led me elsewhere. Most of my gaming group were college friends, and we played at my place in Brooklyn every Wednesday. One week my friend Aaron introduced a new guy into our group. His name was Todd and like the rest of us he had gone to NYU. Aaron told us that Todd was primarily interested in exploring psychotic characters. This proved true enough and soon Todd became known as Crazy Todd.

In 1994 Todd declared that he was going to run a game. What, we wondered, could a Crazy Todd game be like? He told us it was going to be a fantasy game, so I made up a somewhat traditional dwarven cleric. As soon as the game started, I knew it would be a little different. My superiors were named Father Screwloose and Father Rubberband, and the campaign took place in a sort of fantasy frontier town. There we met a wacky Ork named Crud, and set in motion a chain of events that lead to the "radical, free thinking Orks" utterly destroying the town as we all fled in

abject terror. So ended Todd's first campaign.

We ran through several other games, and then Todd said he wanted to run a sequel campaign where we all played Orks. Crud reappeared, in bandages now, and we learned he was a wily Ork shaman. We all played young Orks trying to write our names in blood on the wall of Ork heroes. Everything fell apart during our epic raid on a Squishy Man/Sour Man town. Just about everyone died, Aaron turned into a Squishy Man, and only Brian's goblin escaped alive. The rest of us were judged by Krom, giving the campaign an appropriate conclusion.

The next year I left NYC to start Ronin Publishing. While riding out to Origins with my business partner Neal, we discussed things we could do with the company. We were already publishing the *Whispering Vault*, but we wanted to do some new stuff as well. I had told Neal about Todd's Ork campaign and we agreed that it would make a fun one shot RPG. When we got back from the con, we asked Todd if he'd be willing to write up his crazy world. I would then write some mechanics and Ronin would publish the result.

Well, it's four years later and things have changed quite a bit. I left Boston for Seattle and a job at Wizards of the Coast. Ronin did branch out, publishing my *Feng Shui* sourcebook *Blood of the Valiant*, but the strain of being a bi-coastal company proved too much. And yet I hadn't quite gotten the publishing bug out of my system. In late 1999 I decided to start a successor company to Ronin. And what better first project for this new company than the long delayed *Ork!*? Todd agreed that it would be fun, so he sent me his original manuscript and I proceeded to write the mechanics and make *Ork!* into a unified whole. The result of our labors is the green bombshell you hold in your hands.

I hope that you've enjoyed reading *Ork!*. Now there's only one question left: are you going to put this on your shelf with the rest of your unused RPGs, or go green and run your very first *Ork!* game? C'mon, I dare you!

Me am shut up now!

Chris Pramas

May 1, 2000

Orks of the world unite!

ORK!

NAME _____

ORK POINTS _____

MEAT _____
CLIMB _____
FIGHT _____
JUMP _____
SMASH _____

BONES _____
DRINK _____
RUN _____
SAWBONES _____
SWIM _____

TWITCH _____
CHUCK _____
GRAB _____
EYEBALL _____
RIDE _____
SNEAK _____

MOJO _____
LEAD _____
MAGIC _____
SCENT _____

WEAPON

DAMAGE RATING

ARMOR PROTECTION RATING

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| | | |
| | | |

You Am Kill Like This:

(Attacker's Meat + Weapon Damage Rating) vs. (Defender's Bones + Armor Protection Rating)

Full Move (Meat x10)



WOUND LEVELS

- RIGHT AS RAIN
- JUST A SCRATCH
- OWW. QUIT IT!
- ARRRGHHHHH!
- CALL THE SAWBONES!
- SEE YOU IN HELL

MODIFIER

- 0
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- N/A



STUFF

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"ME AM ORK! ME AM KILL YOU!"

Question: What does it mean to be an Ork? Answer: Being an Ork means being rude, loud, aggressive, sneaky and angry. It means killing that Ork over there because you don't like his hat. It means tearing the still beating heart out of your enemy's chest and eating it. It means looking out for Number One Ork, and screw everybody else. It means being in a constant state of barely controlled psychotic mayhem.

Ork!™ Is 64 pages of blood-soaked merriment. This stand-alone RPG gives you everything you need to descend into the World of Orkness. You'll claw your way out of the Gunk Pit, earn your name with acts of spectacular violence, and bring terror to the Squishy Man villages in the name of All Mighty Krom!

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